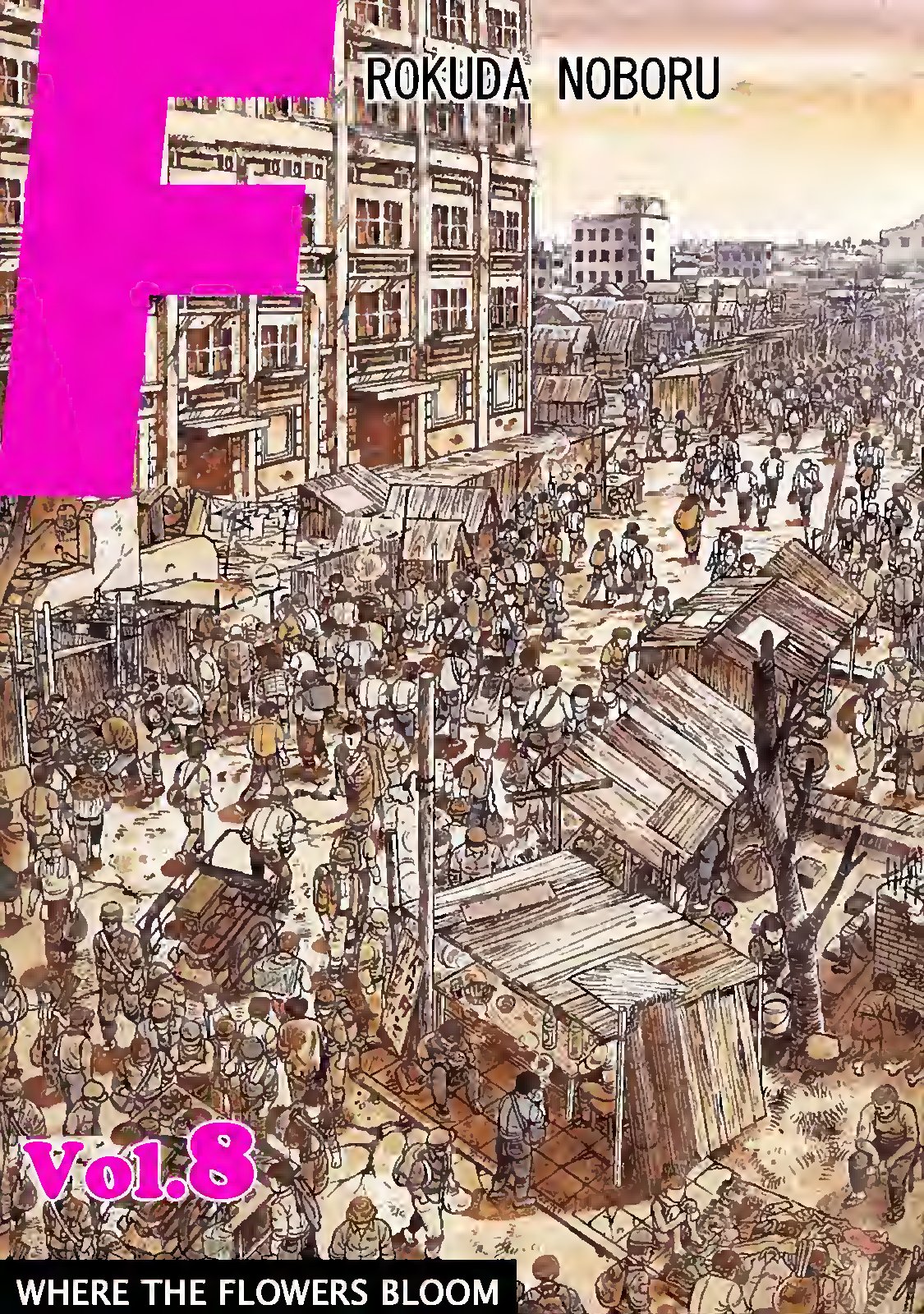
Vol.8
ROKUDA NOBORU

F

Vol.8


ROKUDA NOBORU
Vol.8
WHERE THE FLOWERS BLOOM

F

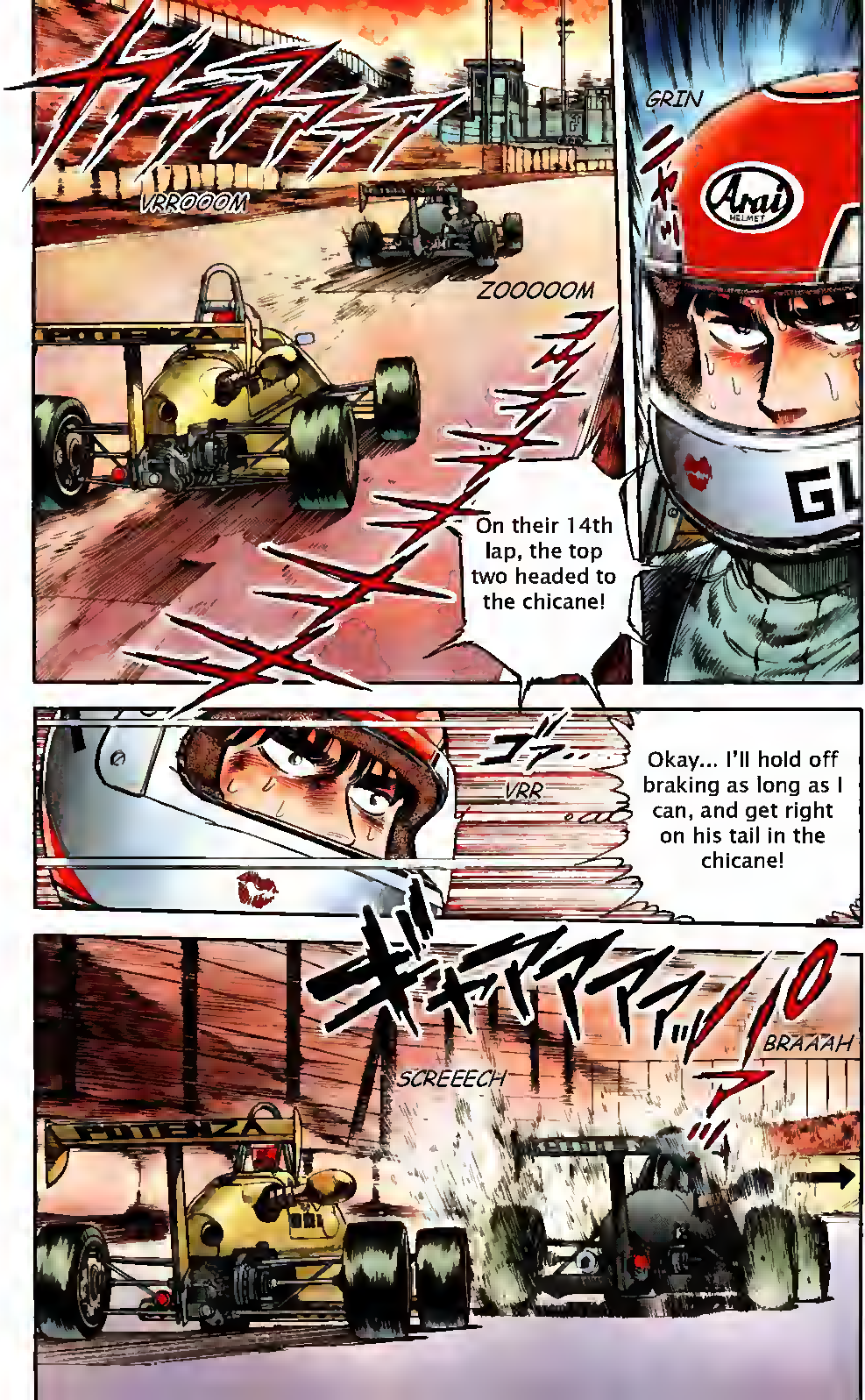
Vol.8
WHERE THE FLOWERS BLOOM

Chapter 1: Final (9)
Chapter 2: Final (10)
Chapter 3: Victory Champaign
Chapter 4: Those Left Behind
Chapter 5: Revival
Chapter 6: Where the Flowers Bloom
Chapter 7: Time Goes On
Chapter 8: Turning Point
Chapter 9: Journey
Chapter 10: Under the Snow
Chapter 11: Legacy
Chapter 12: Afterimage

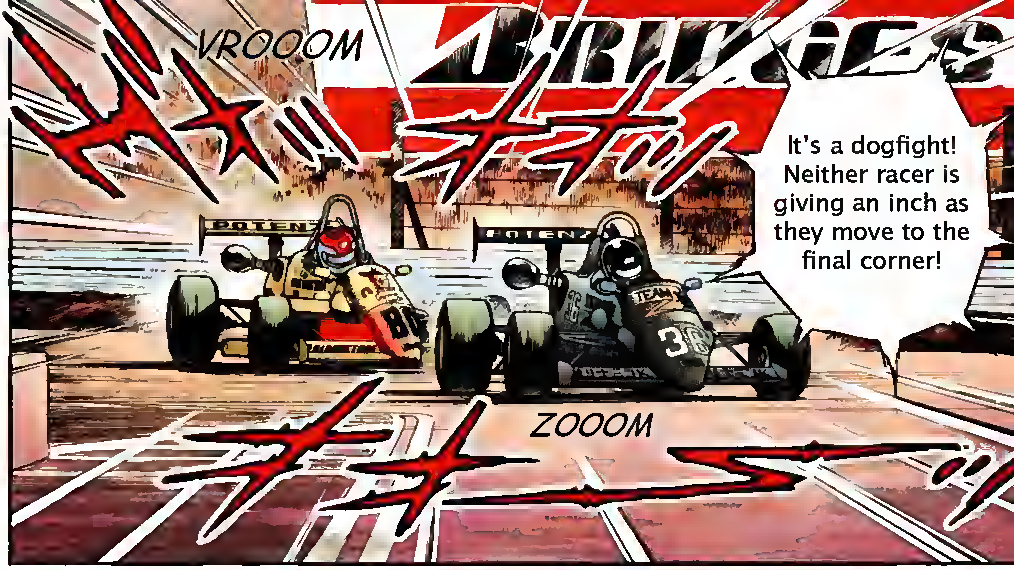
Chapter 1: Final (9)

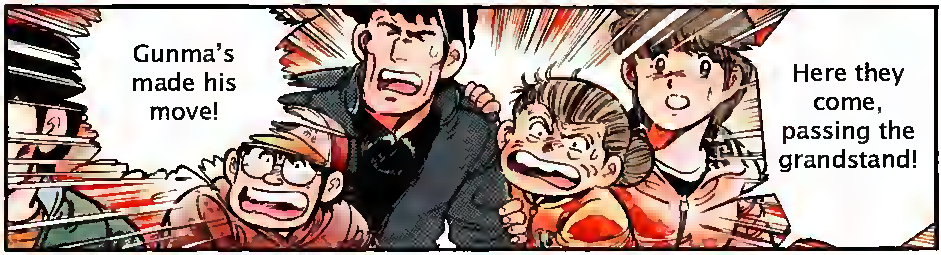
One more lap...
After this lap, there's only one left...
VROOOOOOM
What happened to nobody gettin' in front of me!?
GUNMA KAGI
Come on, Gunma! You idiot!
VRROOOM
This is pathetic!
Since this race started, you've been starin' at Hijiri's tail the whole time.

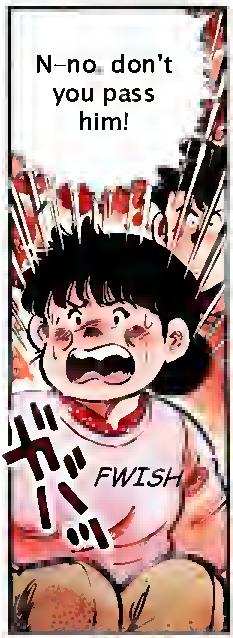
B...
But...
YANK
When are you gonna do something about it!?
There's only about one lap left!
How am I supposed to get a chance to pass him...?
And that acceleration...
YANK
He's got a perfect line.
Bastard is racing almost flawlessly.
Yeah... Acceleration.
SHOOM
I... I'm being dragged along!!
Acceleration...
GUNMA
RACING

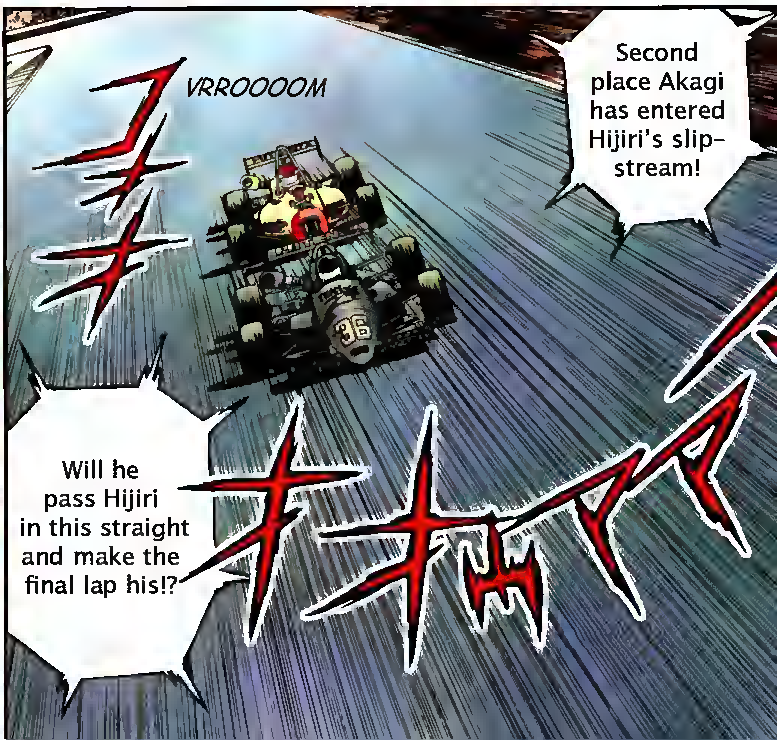

VRROOOM
ZOOOOOM
GRIN
Arai
HELMET
On their 14th lap, the top two headed to the chicane!
VRR
Okay... I'll hold off braking as long as I can, and get right on his tail in the chicane!
SCREEECH
BRAAAH

SHOOM
VROOM
Not yet!
MUTTER
Gunma Akagi in second is braking almost recklessly late at the chicane!
Both cars are nearly colliding! They've exited the chicane in a tight position.
SCREECH
GRIPP

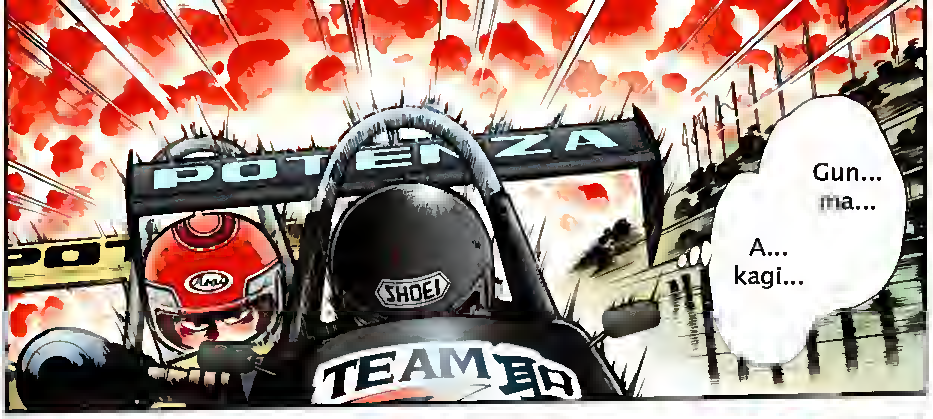

VROOOM
It's a dogfight! Neither racer is giving an inch as they move to the final corner!
ZOOOM


Gunma's made his move!
Here they come, passing the grandstand!

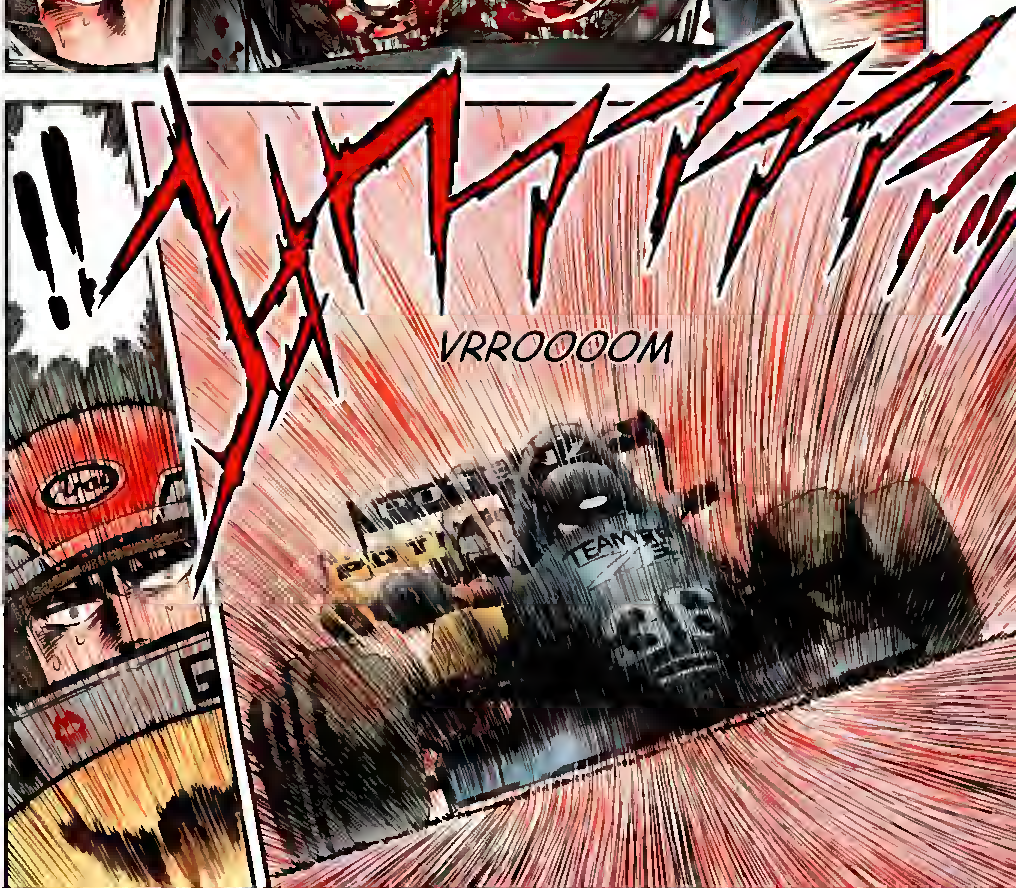

N-no, don't you pass him!
FWISH


VRROOOOM
Second place Akagi has entered Hijiri's slip-stream!
Will he pass Hijiri in this straight and make the final lap his!?

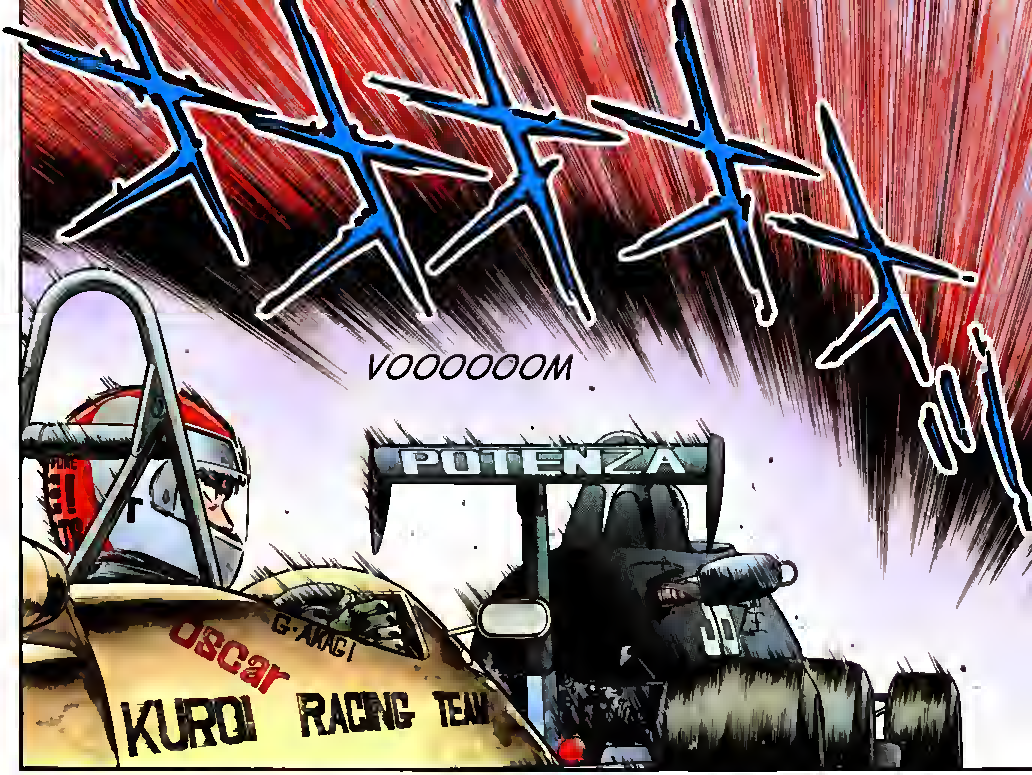
Unfortunately, you're right. If he pushes my car any harder he'll wreck it.
Hijiri still has his extra 20% of potential.
There's no way Gunma can pass him!
3
Accelerate the same way again...
Bring it on, Hijiri...
Stop, Gunma!
You'll wreck it!
I was shocked and didn't do nothin' last time, but you just watch...
That accel-eration that sucked my car in...
That's when you'll lose!
Next time you try and get away...

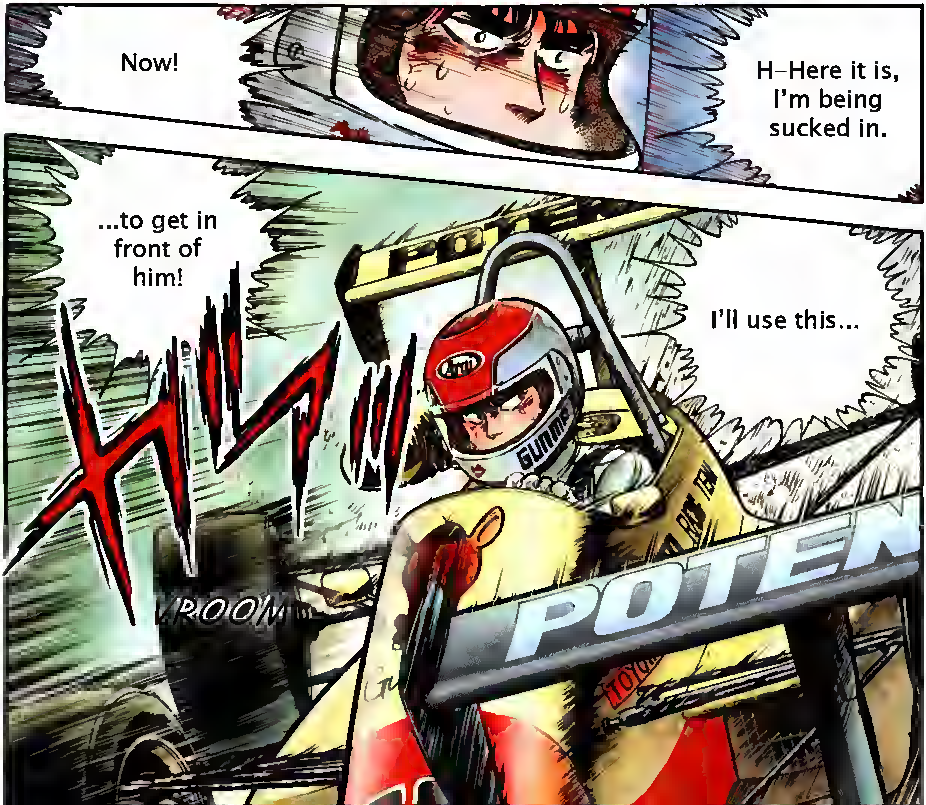

POTENZA
SHOEI
TEAM
Gun...
ma...
A...
kagi...

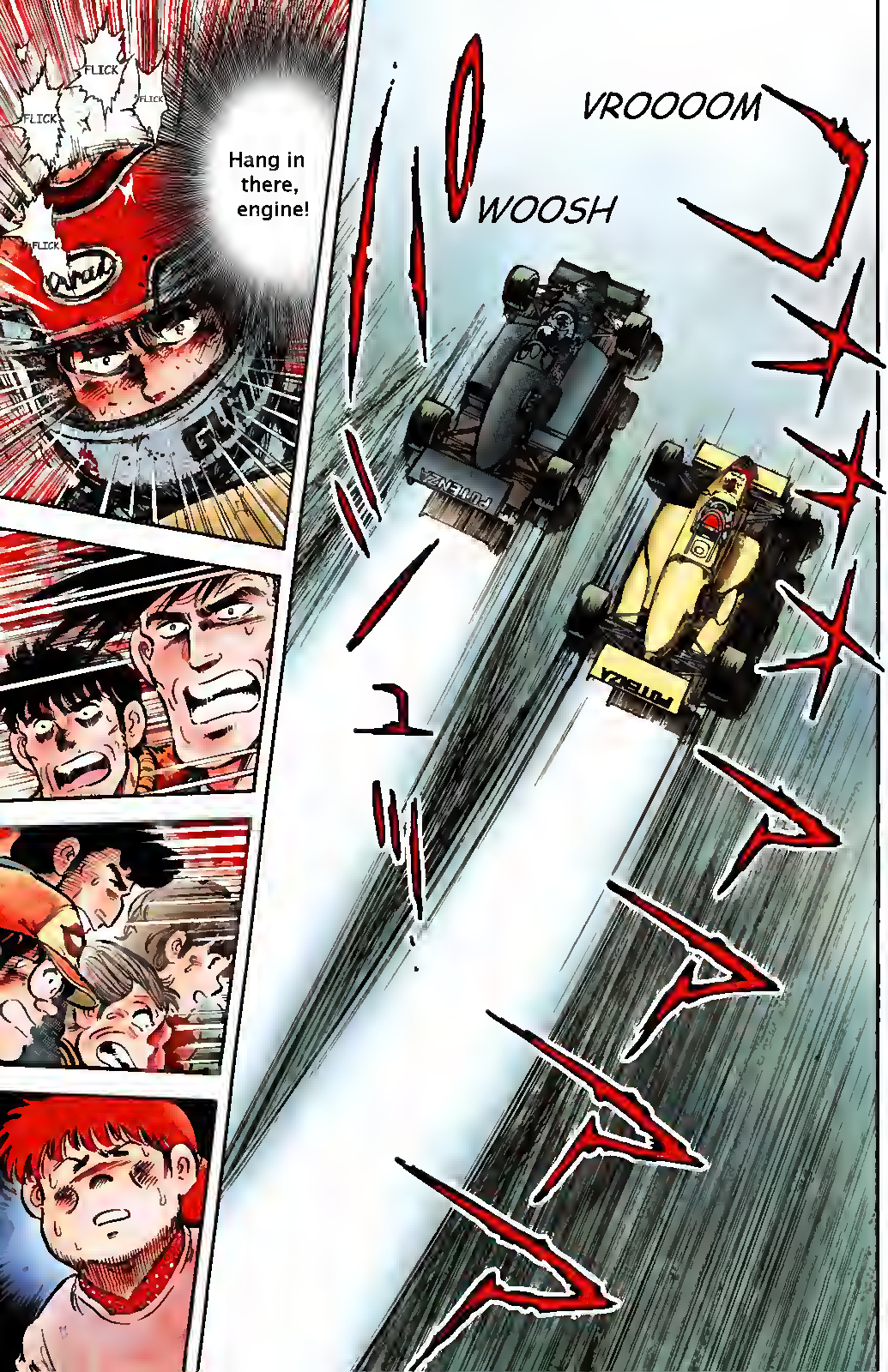
SHOEI
Try and
pass me...


VRROOOOM

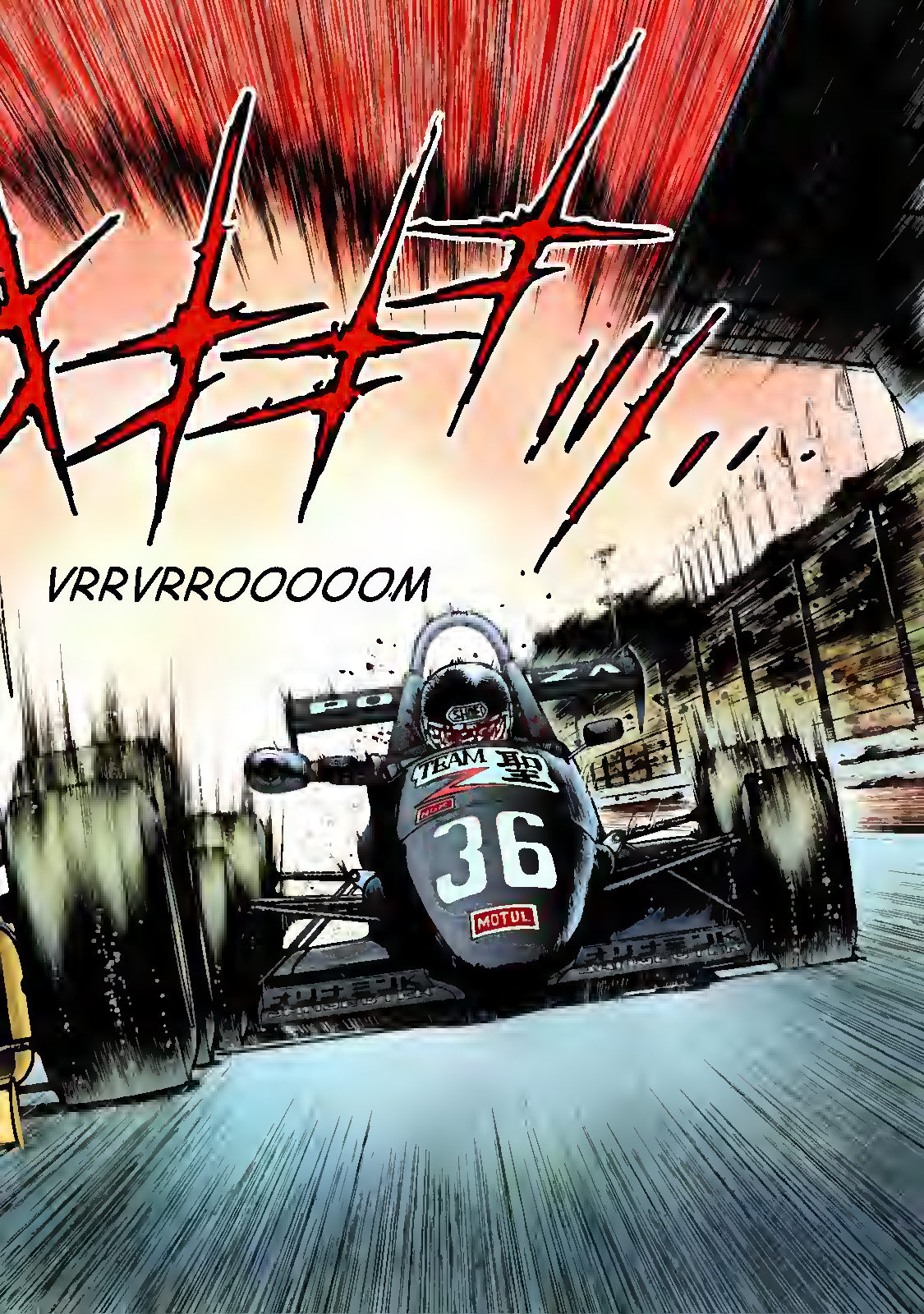
VROOOOOOM
Th-This is amazing!
Kazuto Hijiri has started that incredible acceleration again!
POTENZA
36
SANSECTER

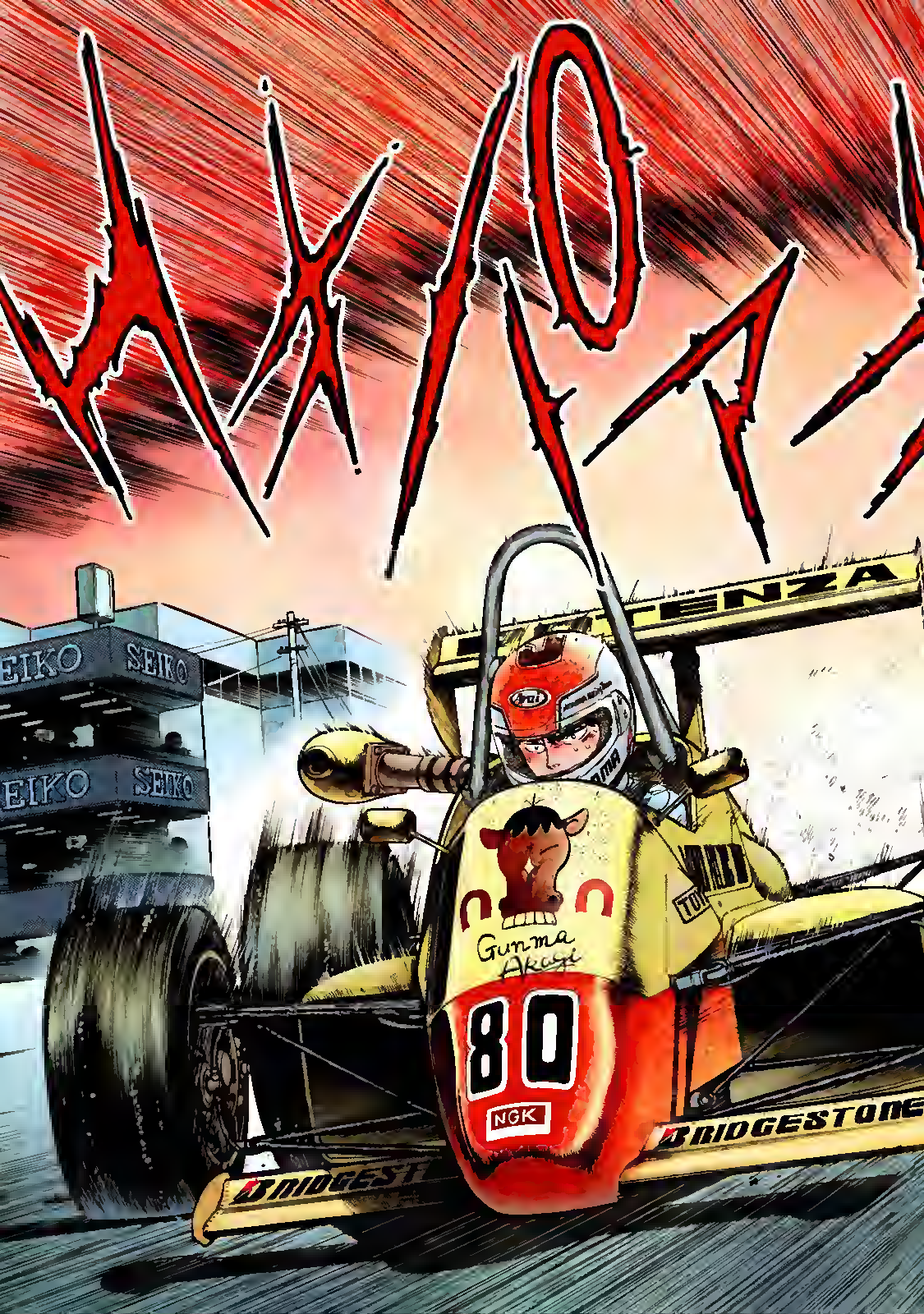

VOOOOOOM
POTENZA
G-ARACI
OSCar
KURO RACING TEAM


Now!
H-Here it is, I'm being sucked in.
...to get in front of him!
I'll use this...
VROOM
POTEN


FLICK
FLICK
FLICK
FLICK
Hang in there, engine!
VROOOOM
WOOSH
FUJENZA
FUJENZA

AKIRA
VRRVRROOOOOM
SEIKO
SEIKO
SEIKO
SEIKO
TENZA
Gunma
Akagi
80
NGK
BRIDGESTONE
BRIDGESTONE
TEAM 童夢
36
MOTUL

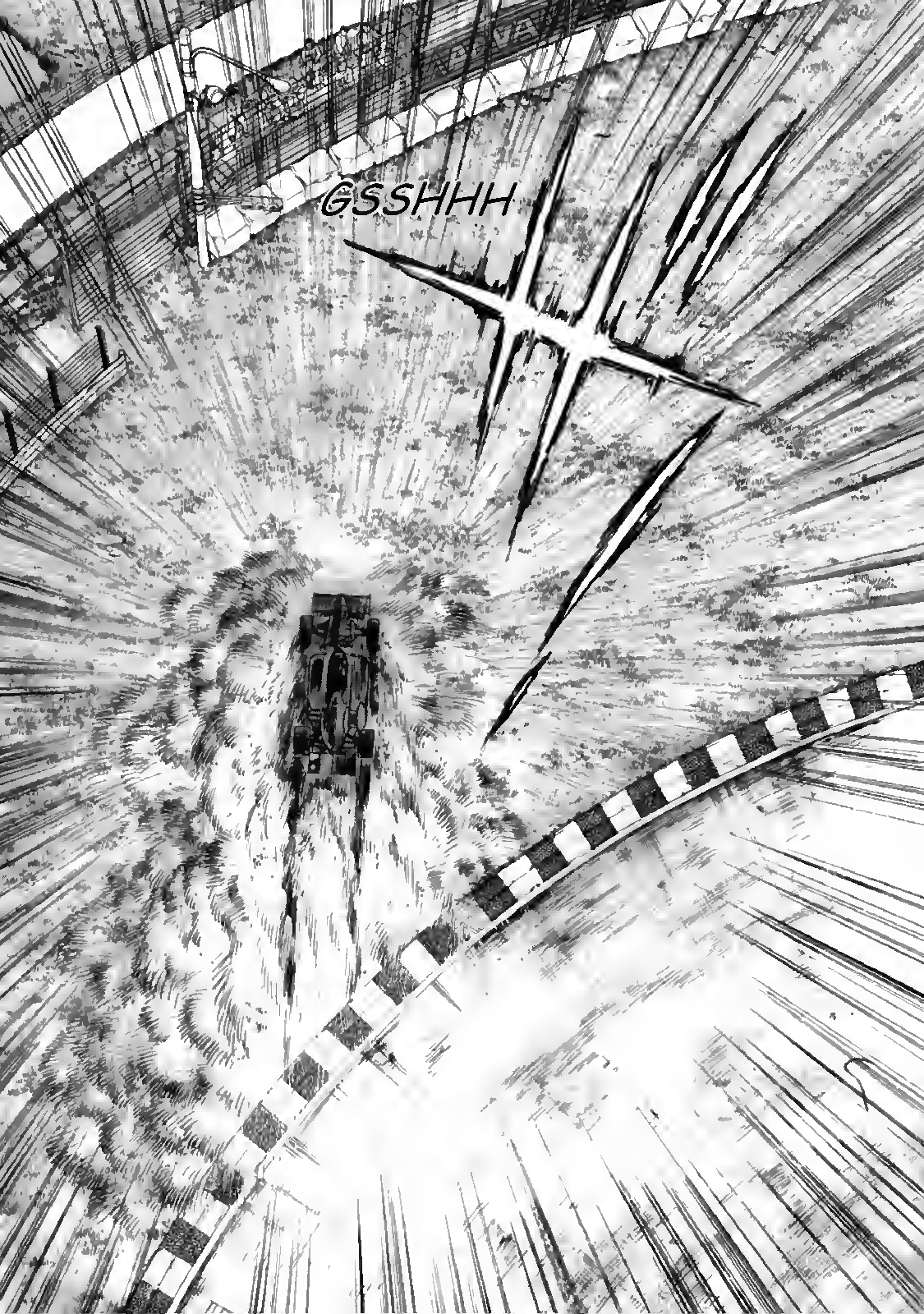

VRRVRROOOOOOM
TEAM 聖
36
MOTUL


AKIO
SEIKO
SEIKO
SEIKO
SEIKO
Gunma
Akagi
80
NGK
BRIDGESTONE
BRIDGESTONE

Akagi's done it! He passed him! He passed Hijiri!
SHOEI
...Akagi used that brief time loss before Hijiri pulled away to exit his slip-stream!
As soon as Hijiri ac-celerated...
...no, with even greater speed, Gunma Akagi...
Then as if dragged along by Hijiri's speed...
SHOEI
ZOOM
W- Woahhh!
80
BRIDGESTONE
BRIDGESTONE

The first corner is rushing up...
ADVAN ADVAN ADVAN ADVAN ADVAN
Ah... Ah... Ah...
ZOOOOOM
BRAH
BRAH
SCREECH
KURO RACING TEAM
TOYOTA
30

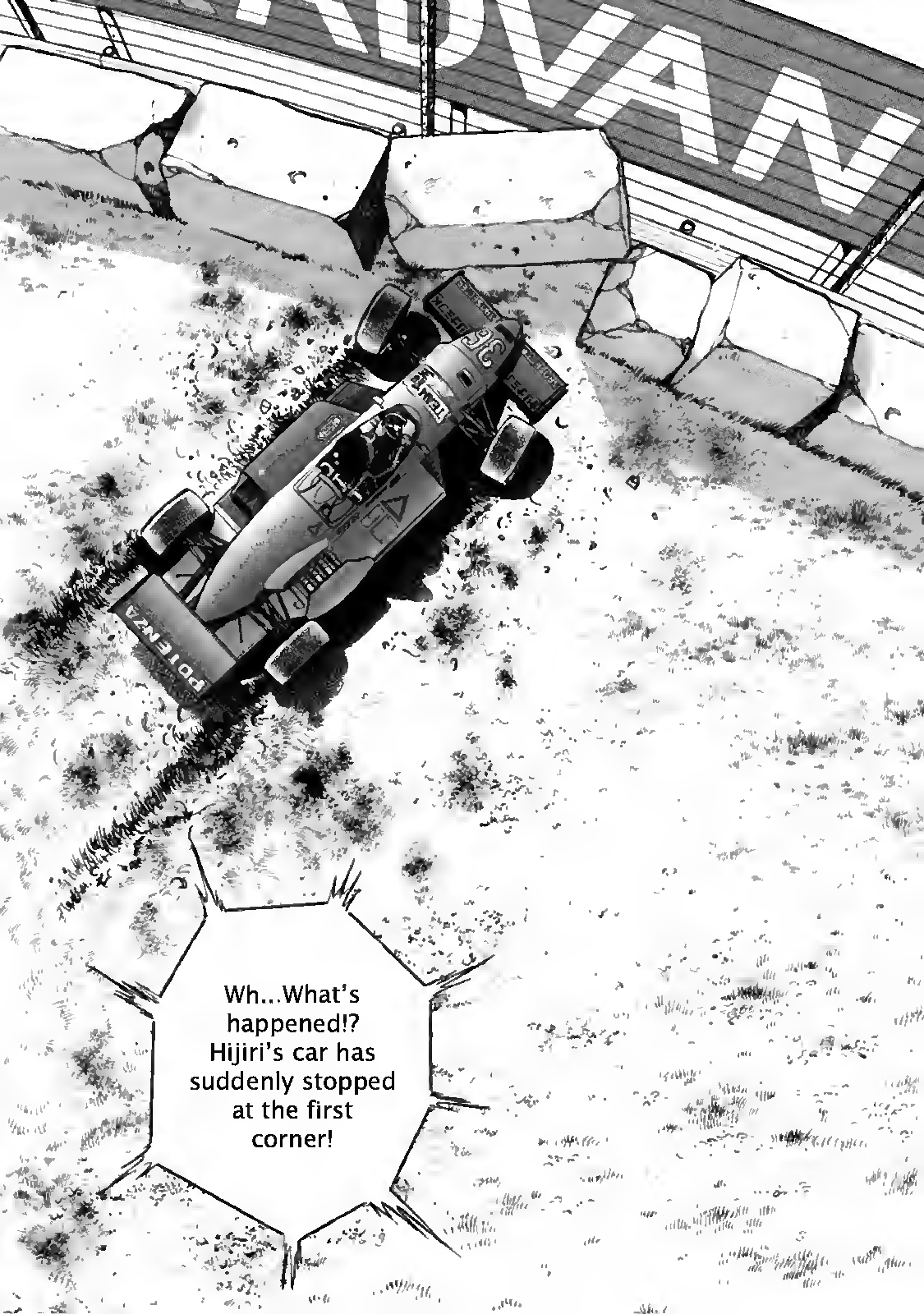
HUFF
HUFF
I... I... I did it...
In the final lap, he has passed Hijiri to take the lead, and cleared the first corner!
VROOM
Akagi's done it! He has done it!
SCREEECH
!?
N-Nobody gets in front...
!
!!
Wh-What!? This...
All over my visor...
Hi-Hijiri ...!?
Blood ...!?


GSSHHH

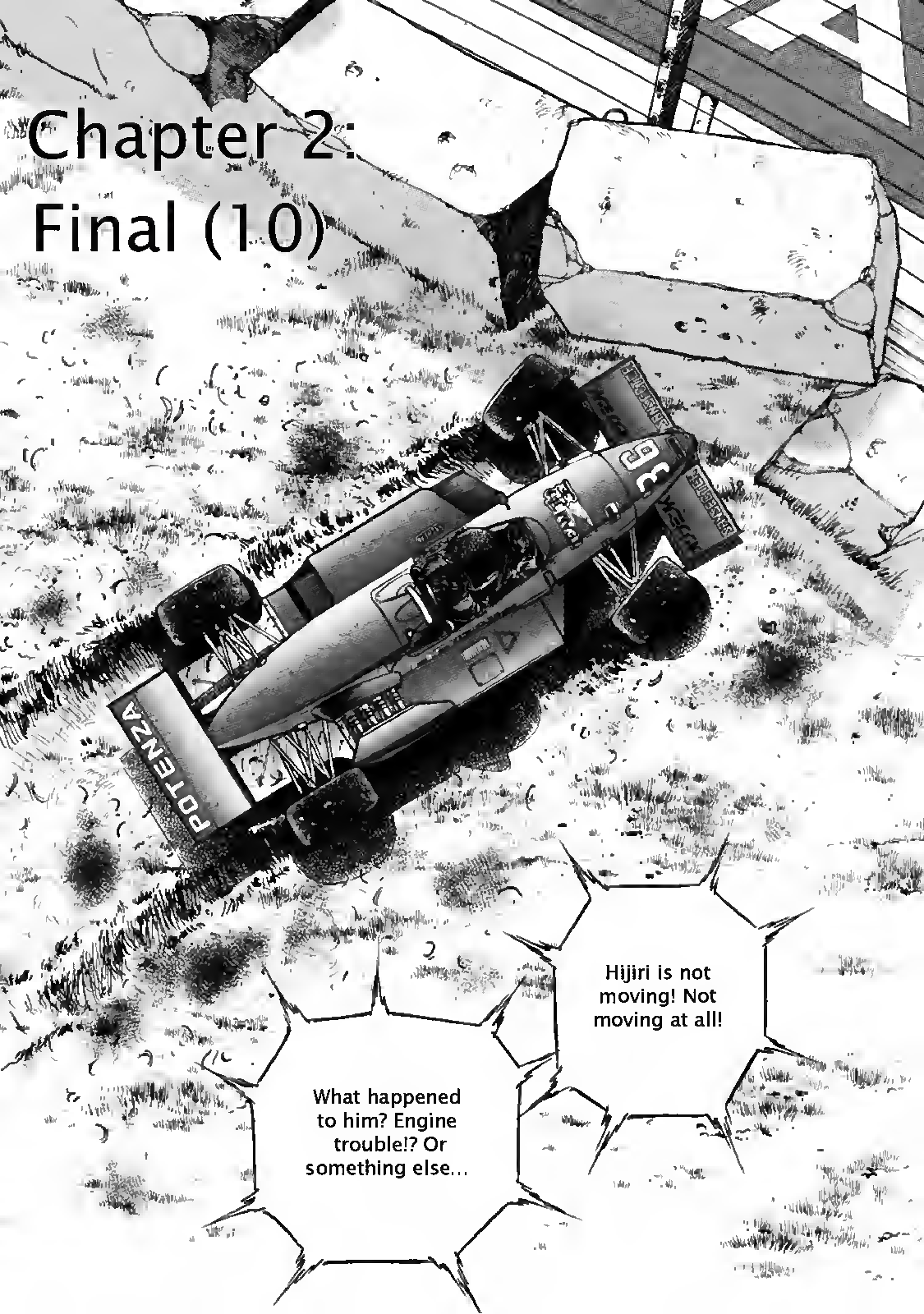
SMASH
PO
ZA

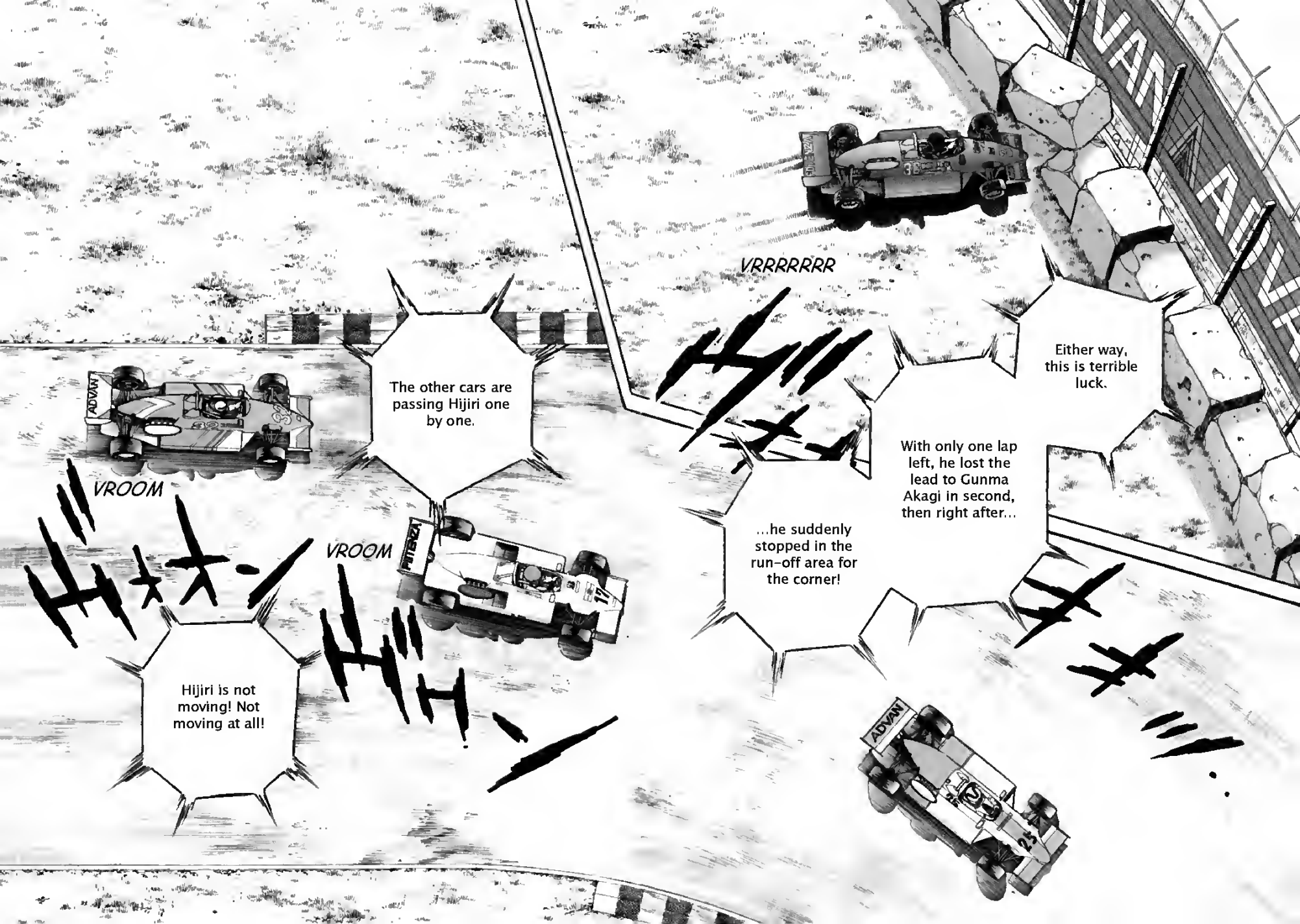
SMASH
NAKED

PO
ZA
ZA

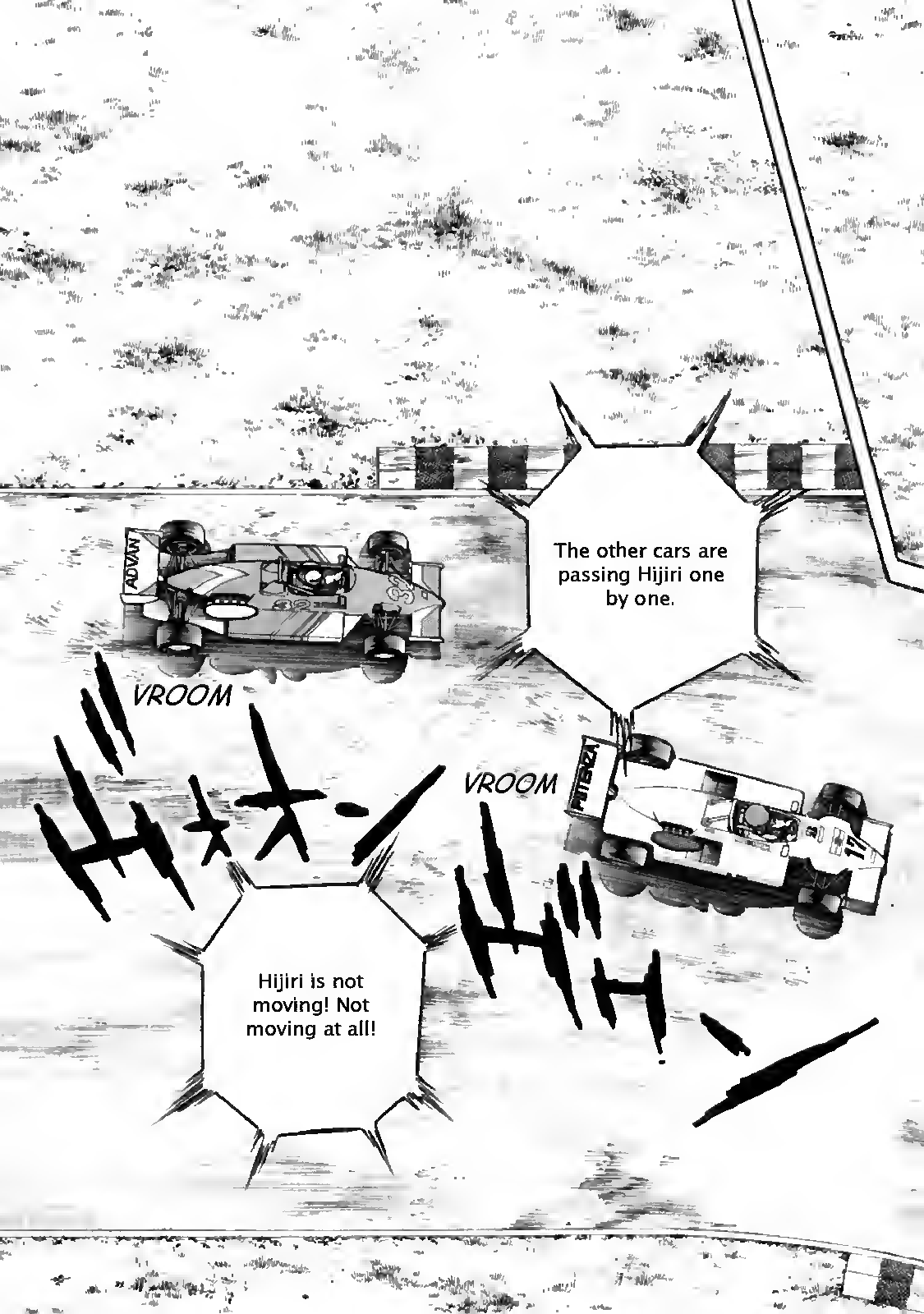

Wh...What's happened!? Hijiri's car has suddenly stopped at the first corner!

Chapter 2: Final (10)

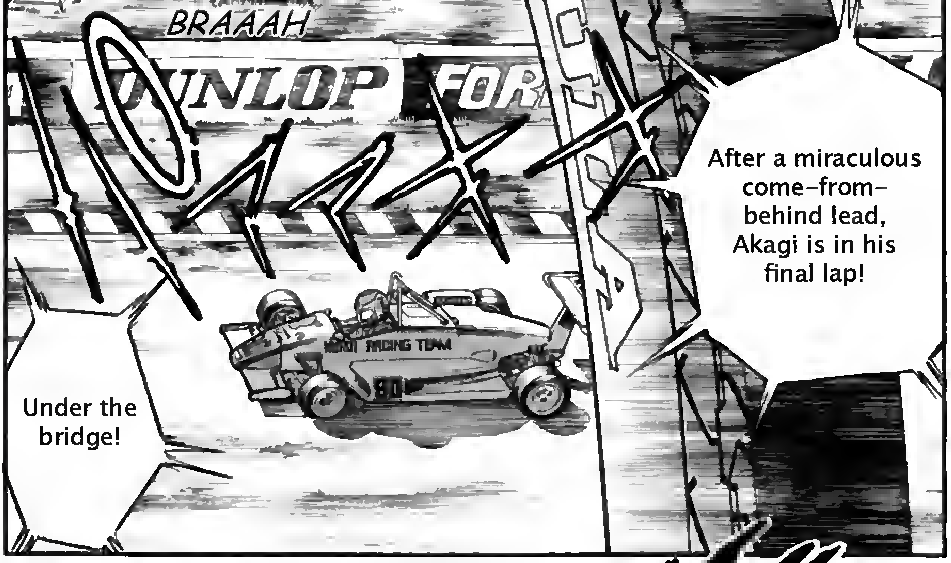


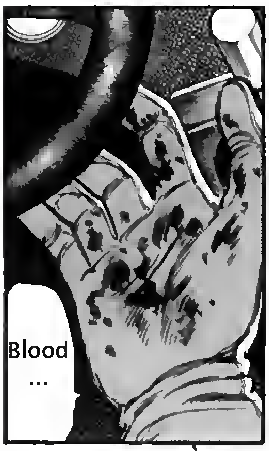

VROOM
The other cars are passing Hijiri one by one.
VROOM
Hijiri is not moving! Not moving at all!
VRRRRRRR
...he suddenly stopped in the run-off area for the corner!
With only one lap left, he lost the lead to Gunma Akagi in second, then right after...
Either way, this is terrible luck.

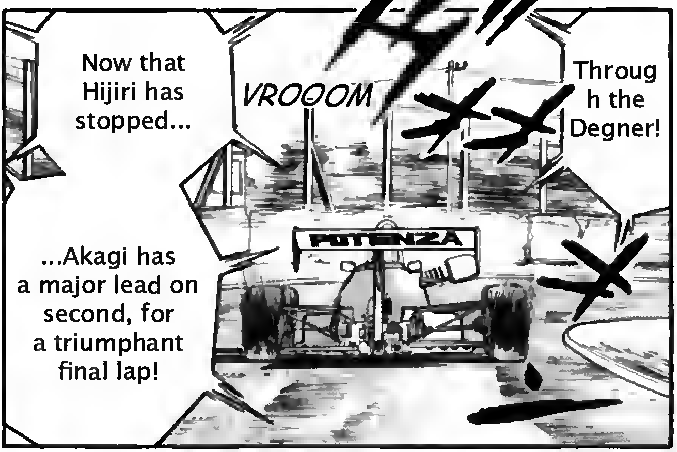
VRRRRRRR
Either way, this is terrible luck.
With only one lap left, he lost the lead to Gunma Akagi in second, then right after...
...he suddenly stopped in the run-off area for the corner!
ADVAN


ADVAN
The other cars are passing Hijiri one by one.
VROOM
VROOM
PIRELLI
Hijiri is not moving! Not moving at all!

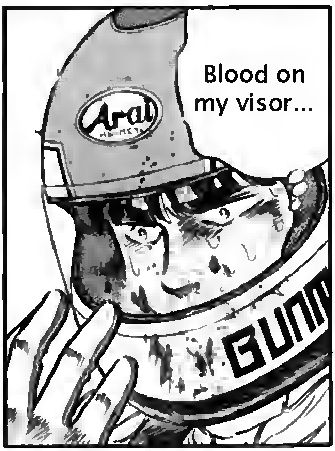
MURMUR
Yeah ...
Hey...
What's going on? Damn it!
Mr. Hijiri...
MURMUR
I said I know!
He's in the lead.
Yeah ... I know.
Mr. Kuroi, Mr. Kuroi! Akagi's in the lead.
MURMUR
MURMUR
VROOH
Yeah ...
SUZUKI
It's hard to see from here, but he's still slouched over.
What happened to Hijiri ....
Yeah!
He did it!
He's not moving ...
MURMUR
YEAHHH
Gunma did it, he did it!


BRAAAH
DUNLOP
After a miraculous come-from-behind lead, Akagi is in his final lap!
Under the bridge!


Blood ...


Now that Hijiri has stopped...
...Akagi has a major lead on second, for a triumphant final lap!
VROOOM
Throug h the Degner!
POTENZA

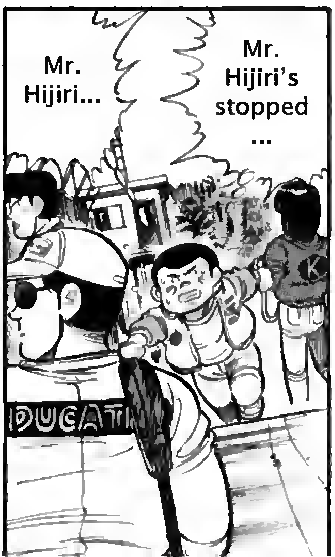
Why...!?
ZOOM
And why isn't Hijiri chasin' me!?
TOYOTA
NGK


Blood on my visor...
Arai

What happened to Hijiri!?
Gunma Akagi

What ...!?

Did you hear? Hijiri stopped at the first corner.


Mr. Hijiri...
Mr. Hijiri's stopped ...

YEAHH
You lost...
You lost, Tamo-tsu...
YEAHH
No. 80 Gunma Akagi, coming through the final corner!
Heading to the check-ered flag!
BRIDGESTONE
VROOM
Gunma Akagi's car is in sight!
The checkered flag is in front of his eyes!
VRRVRROOOM
80
BRIDGESTONE

ZOOOOM
He made it!
No. 80 Gunma Akagi is the winner!

Jerk!
Aw, damn it!
KISS Me!
Hijiri!
ZA
Hijiri ...!?
!
TOYOTA

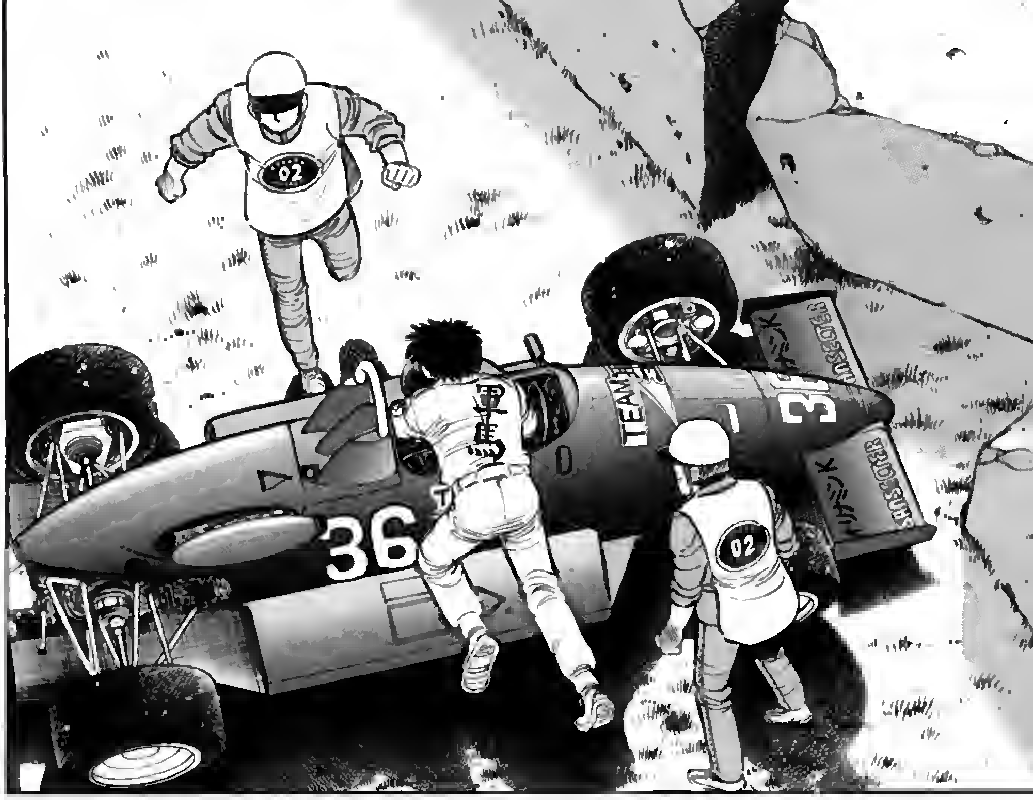
He's approaching Hijiri's car.
What's this? Akagi has quit his victory lap and stopped at the first corner!
GSSHHH
...
Ambulance! Get an ambulance!
Hurry up!

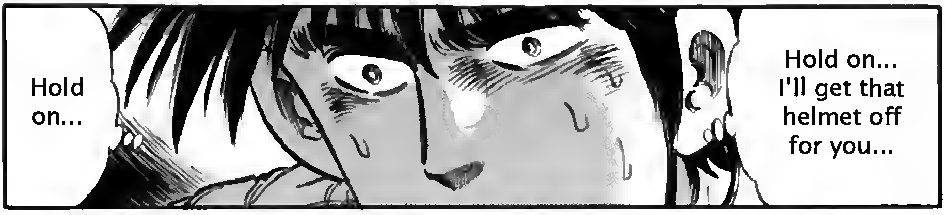
HIJIRI
RUSH
W-What happened to him...?
No idea... There's blood everywhere!
Hi...
Hijiri...
What the hell, Hijiri...? You...
KAZUTO
TAP
Man up! Hey! Hijiri!

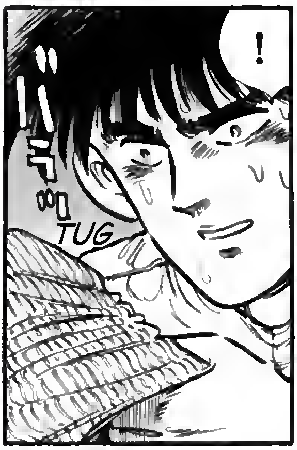
The world's yours...
HIZIRI
DUNLOP

SHOEI
Go on... Get out there...
IZIRI

SLUMP
Hi...
G
SLIP
Hijiri!
COURSE
02
OFFICIAL


02
36
TEAM
02


Hold on...
Hold on... I'll get that helmet off for you...


!
TUG

The mask too. Must've been suffo-cating... Just hold on a second...

KAZUTO

Come on now... Hijiri...
You're ruining your style...
Oh... hell... His hair... his hair...
TUG
Hey!
Wh...Where are you going?
TEAM

To the podium...

F

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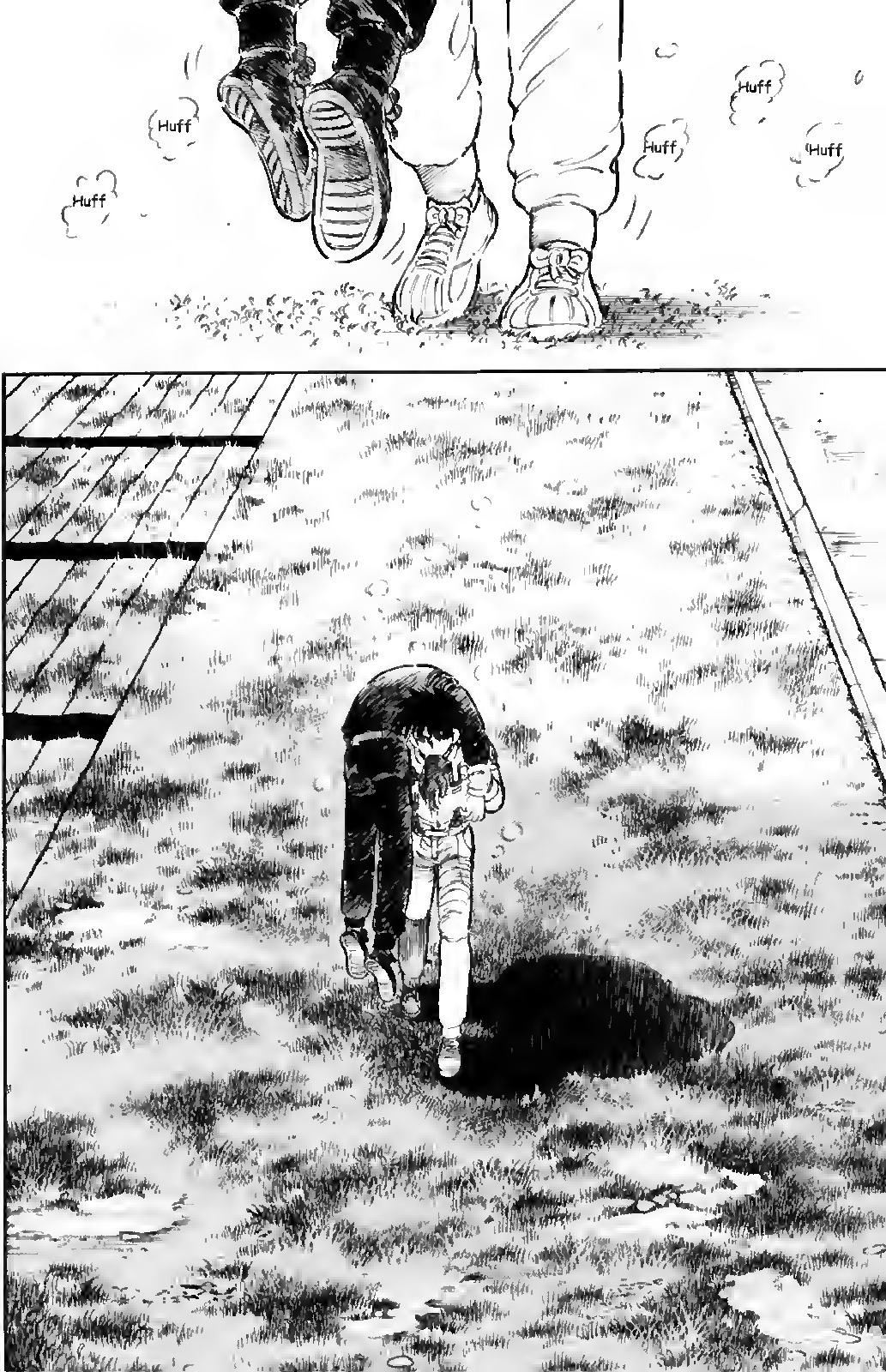
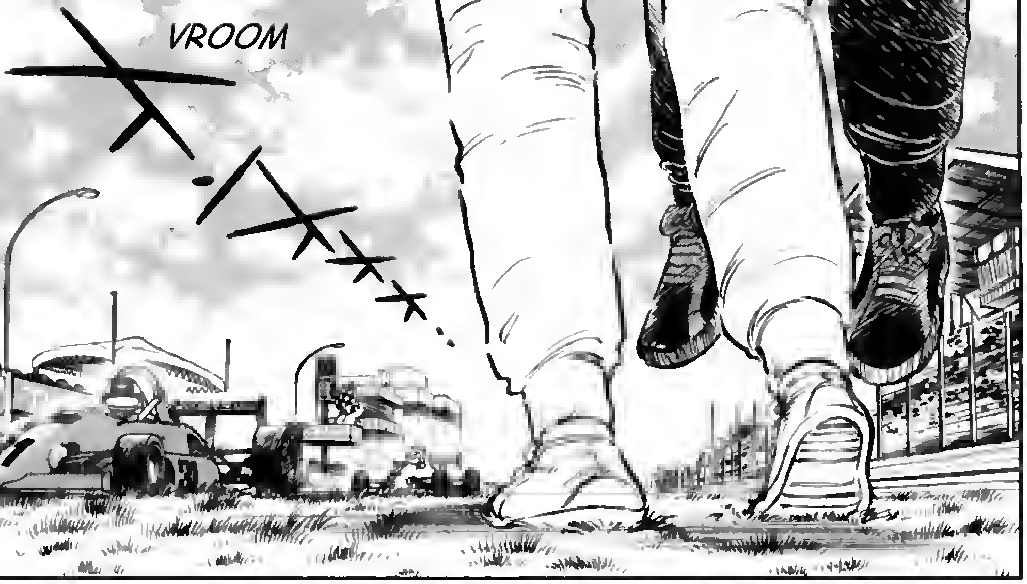
Chapter 3:
Victory Champaign
2
1
3


Huff
Huff
Huff
Huff
Huff


VROOM

Has something happened to Hijiri!? He appears to be totally unconscious!
A-Akagi is... Akagi is walking back from the first corner carrying Hijiri!

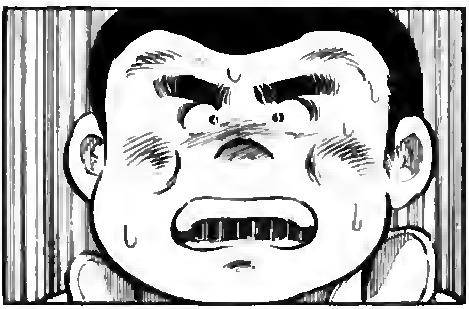
What happe-ned!? Is he okay?
SCREECH
CLUNK
I'll carry him!
Back off! Don't touch him!
TWITCH
... neces-sary.
Treat-ment... ...ain't gonna be...
Just leave it to us.
But we have to treat him right away ...

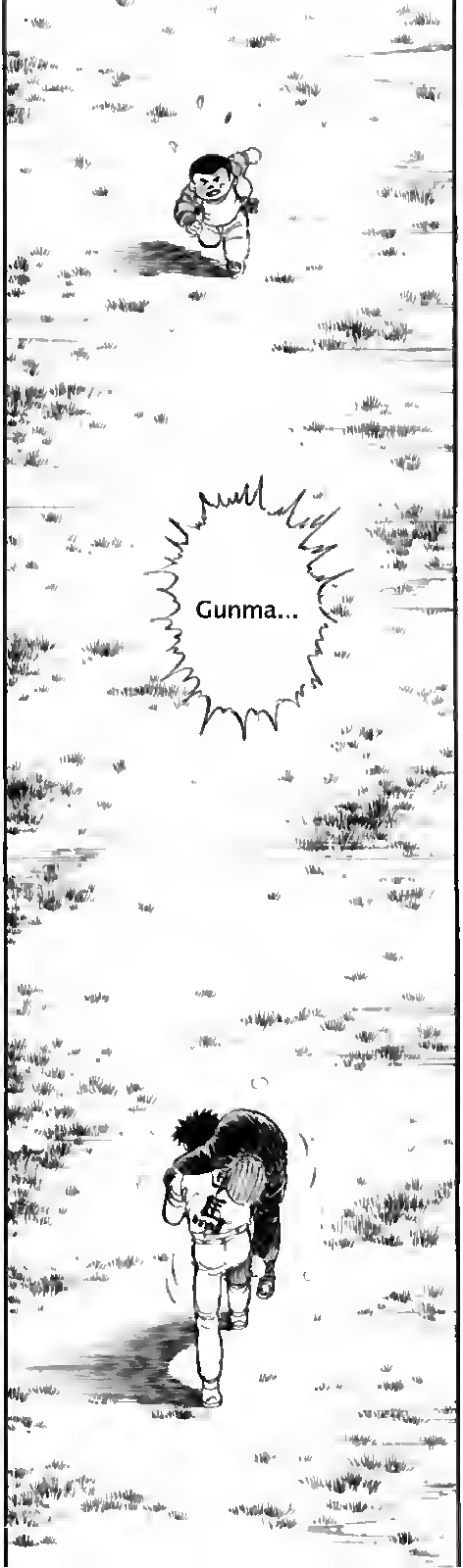
You knew your body wouldn't be needin' any treat-ment...
I'll show you something interesting.
I get it now... You knew about this, Hijiri...
I'm gonna be Mr. Hijiri's mechanic for a while.
I can't say why... If I did, Mr. Hijiri wouldn't be able to race no more...
D...Dead...
Tamotsu must've known too...
H... How...
Dead ...

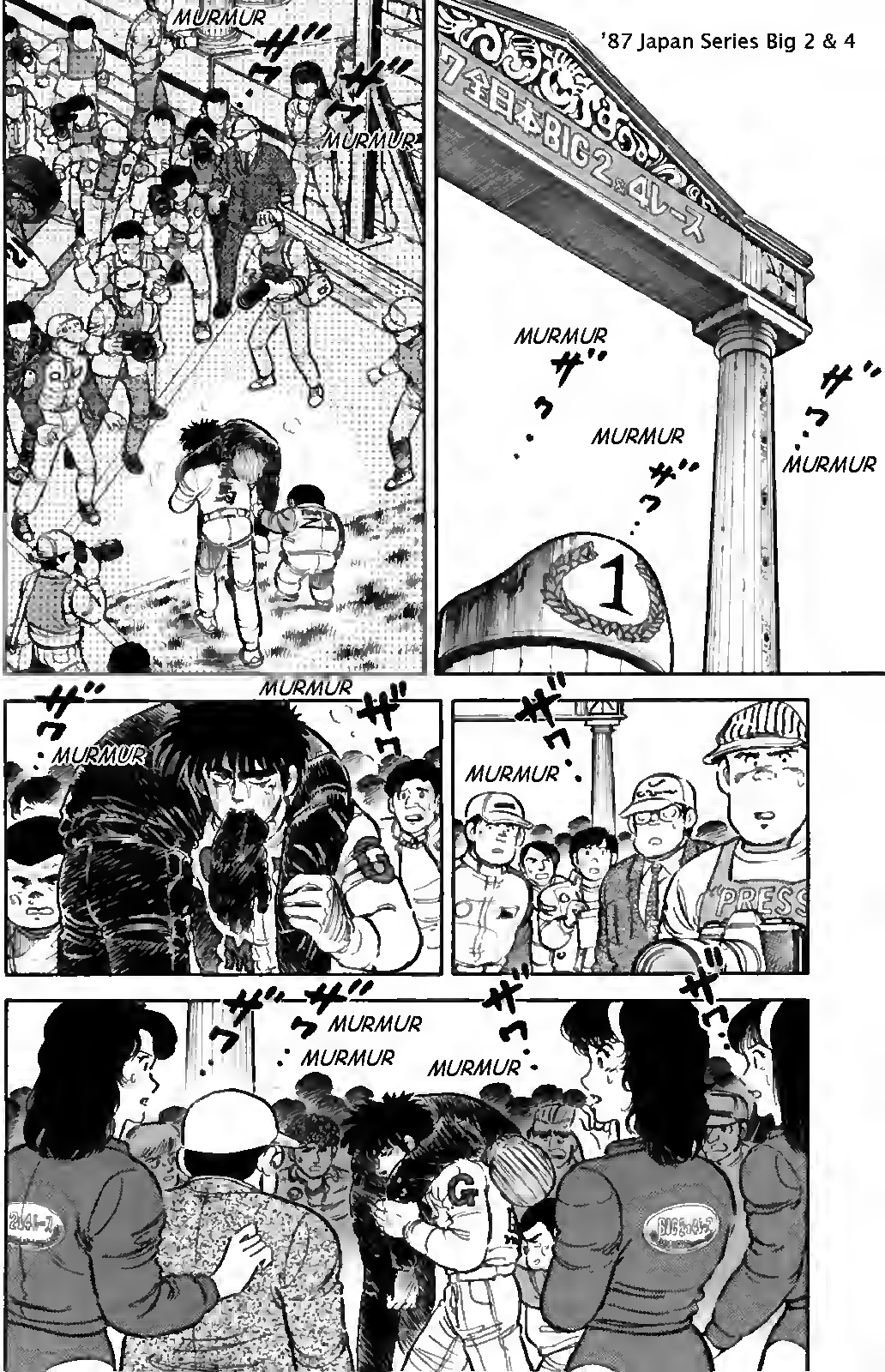
MURMUR
MURMUR
Mr. Hijiri!
What the heck happened to him?
MURMUR
MURMUR
Yeah ...
Seems serious.
Where's Mr. Hijiri!?
TEAM
Oh!
Huff
Huff
Huff
Huff
Hey... Tamotsu!

M...Mr. Hijiri...

Huff
Huff
Huff




Gunma...


'87 Japan Series Big 2 & 4
MURMUR
MURMUR
MURMUR
MURMUR
MURMUR
MURMUR
MURMUR
MURMUR
MURMUR
G
G

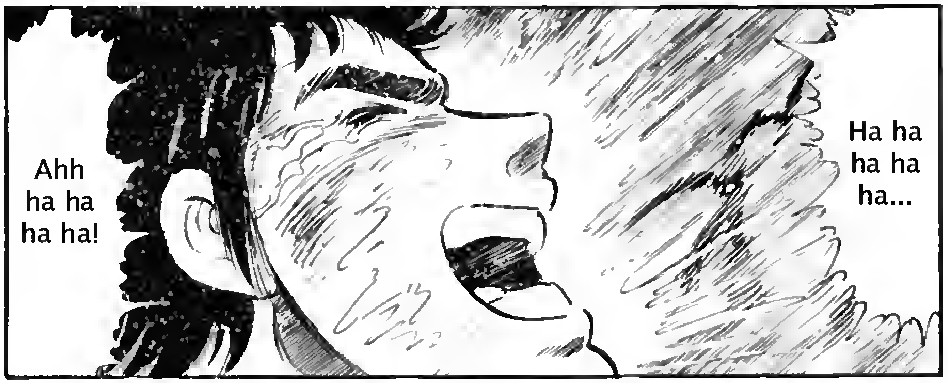
'87 全日本BIG2&4レース
'87 Japan Series Big 2 & 4
1
2
3
PRESS
S-159

...
GLANCE
Tamotsu...
The cham-
pagne...
Uh...
Uhh...

SNIFF
SNIFF
All right …
Let's do this right, Hijiri…
POP
That's right…!

Yeaaahhhh!

SPLASH
Aha ha ha...
Ha ha ha ha...


Ahh ha ha ha ha!
Ha ha ha ha ha...

Ahhhh ha ha ha ha... ha ha...
GOOD MAN

She's not here...
Where's Ms. Ruiko!?
SNAP
SNAP
SNAP
!
But what about Mr. Hijiri!?
Uh... She said she wasn't feeling well, and went back to the hotel...
Huh!?
H-Hey, where's Ms. Ruiko!?
The hotel...!
SNAP
Let me through!
P-Please let me through.
No... dang it!

DASH
Ms. Ruiko's room is in Block A...
SLAM
It's locked ...
BAM
BAM
It's me, Tamotsu!
Ms. Ruiko! Ms. Ruiko!
SLAM
WHAM
WHAM
Crap!

M...
Ms. Ruiko!

F

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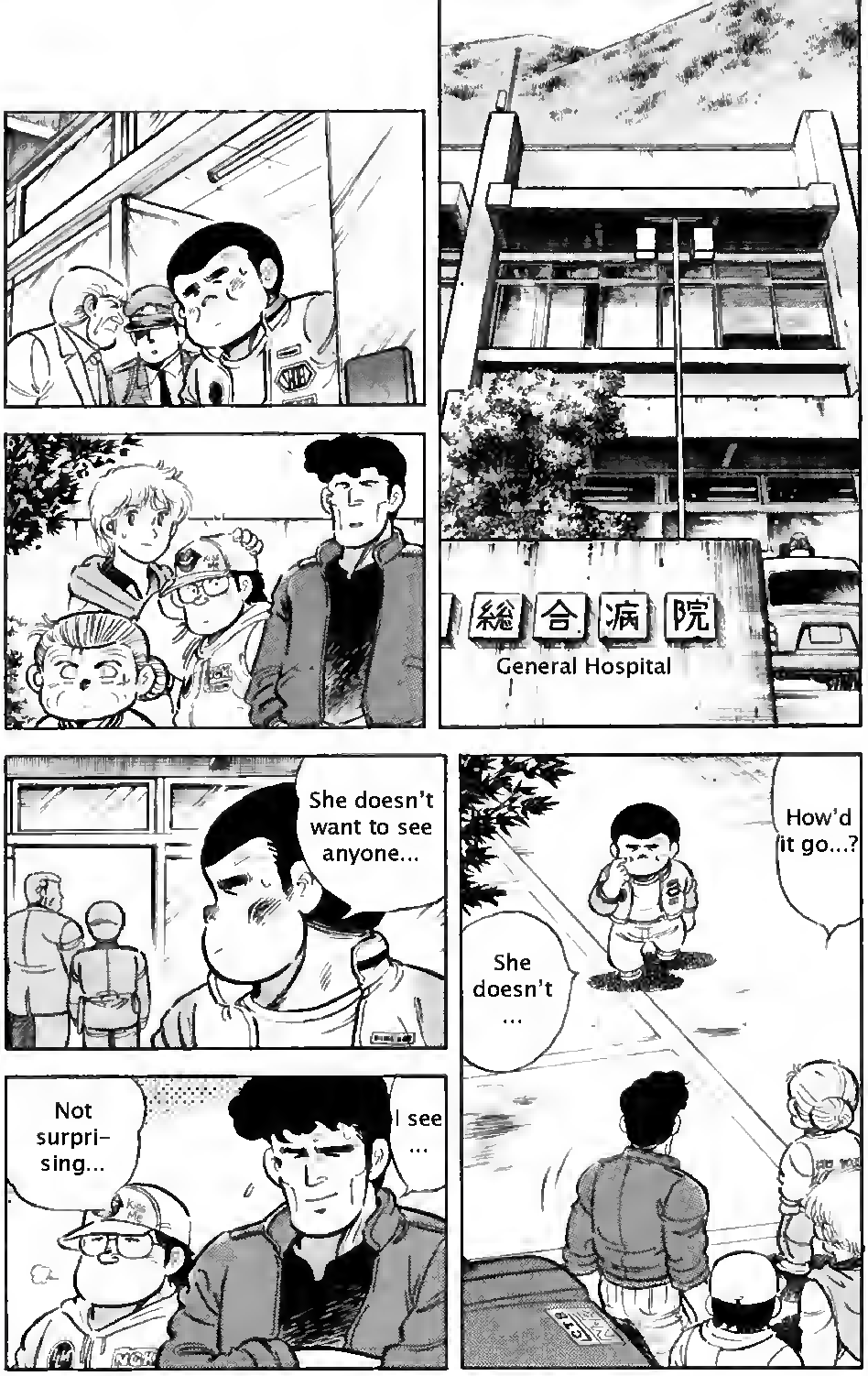
Chapter 4:
Those Left Behind


総合病院
General Hospital
She doesn't want to see anyone...
How'd it go...?
She doesn't ...
Not surpri-sing...
I see ...

How was she? What did the doctor say?
He said it's been three days, so she should be okay...
Good thing you found her so quick.
You saved her because you kept calm and didn't panic...
That ain't true...
I was totally panicked when I found her...
I saw that empty bottle of sleeping pills, and thought I had to make her puke...
I stuck my fingers down her throat and made her puke...
Didn't even think about her feelings...
As far as she's concerned ...
...living might be more painful than dying could ever be...
TEAM 聖

Let's go get some grub!
SMACK
Yeah... Don't worry about pointless stuff.
Dying doesn't solve anything!
Idiot!
Gunma should be there too.
They're going back to Tokyo today.
We're meeting up with Mr. Kuroi and them.
We aren't that close, but it's not like we're strangers either...
We can't just leave her alone like this...
W-Well, that may be, but...
SLAM
Shouldn't you be going too? how long are you taking off work anyways!?
I want to apologize to her anyways...
Uh... I'll look after Ms. Ruiko...
...
The Team Hijiri guys already went back with the body...

YAK
YAK
Hey, over here!
HA HA HA
YEAH YEAH
YAK YAK
Hey there!
Heh heh...
Momma ...!?
M...

C'mon, honey...
...
CHUG
!
Tamotsu... I'm... going back home...
THUMP
B-But... Dad, you beat my car...
...
If my car lost to your car, then I'd give up racing and go on back home.
I promised her before the race.

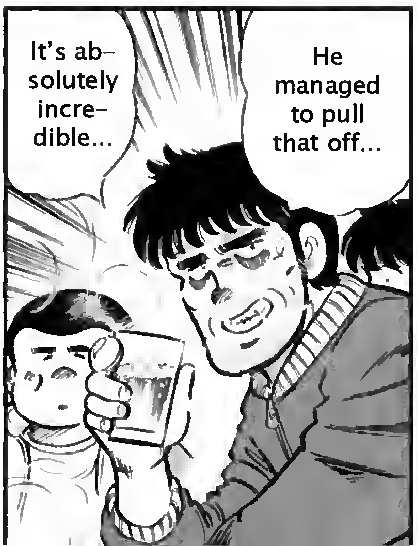
No! I lost...
It wasn't my car that won, it was Gunma Akagi.

Sh...Sha dowing?
Even though our car had less potential, he made up for it by shadowing Hijiri's car!
This guy here drove the last two laps of the race like some kinda miracle.

When racing towards the sun, the shadow is behind, but when changing directions, the shadow moves in front!
Yeah, shad-owing ...

By Gunma gettin' right behind Hijiri in his slip-stream...
...he used the small... really small attraction created by the vortex of air to pull his car forward.
With a normal slipstream, he couldn't pass Hijiri. With that explosive acceleration, it would be over.
But by making that split-second timing to match Hijiri's acceleration, he used the pull between the cars to its fullest.

But if the worst hadn't happened and Hijiri managed to race the last lap...
...Hijiri definitely would have retaken the lead...


He managed to pull that off...
It's absolutely incredible...

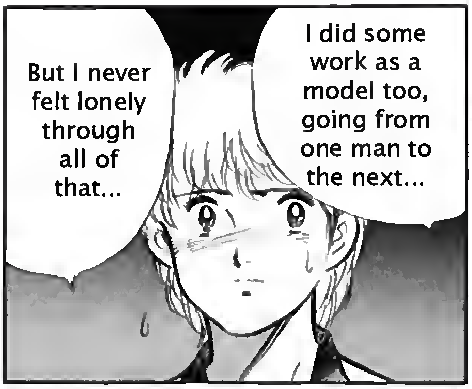
Just the two of us!
Guess what Tamotsu? We're going on a hot springs trip for a few days!
GLUG
That's why I lost...
Gunma Akagi here knows that better than anyone else...
That's great... Momma...
That...
SOB
SOB
SOB
It's all thanks to you... Tamotsu, you...
It's been 15 years... I haven't left the village for 15 years...
F-First we're gonna go to Matsusaka, and have real Matsusaka beef! Then go to the Nanki hot springs.
...
SWISH
Momma ...
SOB
SOB
SOB
Hey, knock it off!

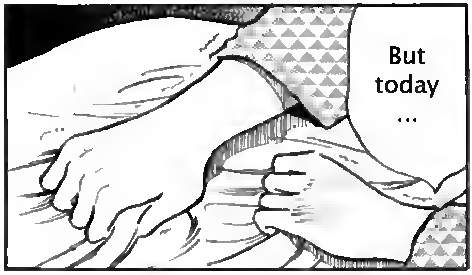
I've barely spoken with her before...
But we're both women.
...
I'll try the hospital again...
Toilet?
...she must be lonely...
I'm sure...
KNOCK KNOCK

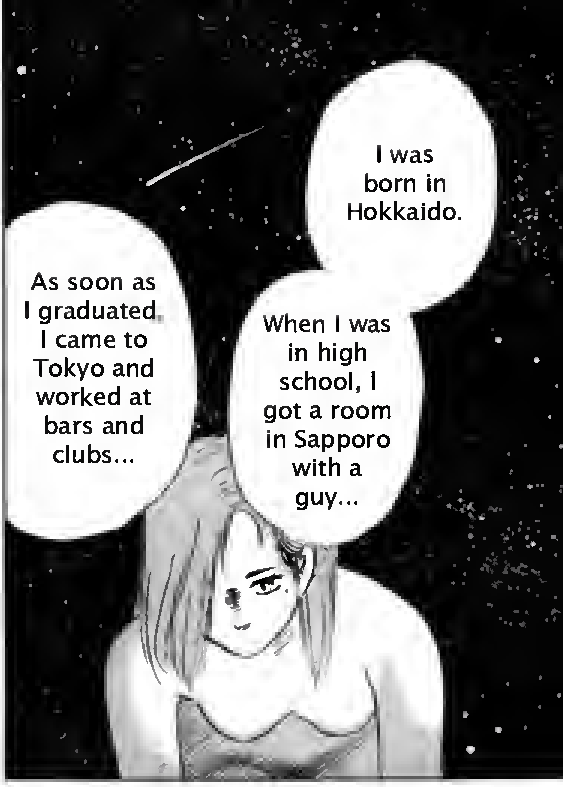
Visiting hours are over. I snuck in!
Shush!
パタン
CLICK
Who's there!?
He's tall, handsome and real arrogant.
He's an architect with an office in Harajuku or something...
Oh, I know this guy!
...
Were you... watching TV?
Were you ...
NANJA KANJA FOR MEN
He's just showing off...

No... but I thought you might ...
You smoke?
Sure.
Um... You wouldn't happen to have
...would you?
Ha... I knew it!
Tastes terrible.
I know... right?
Why do men always try to show off...?
Don't worry about it.
Thanks ...
CLICK
I was a little chilly, but I stood there naked and added cold water to the bath.
Mixing it in...
I went, but when I stripped and tried to get in, it was so hot...
There's a bath on the third floor...
A nurse told me to take a bath earlier.

I couldn't see anything, and couldn't even tell where I was.
Then there was a bunch of steam everywhere...
...and everything became white...
All alone... naked...
Standing and swishing the water around.
I was just mixing the water, in order to warm myself up...
I didn't know what I wanted to do.
I didn't even know who I was.
That's all I was doing...
I've never been so lonely in my life...

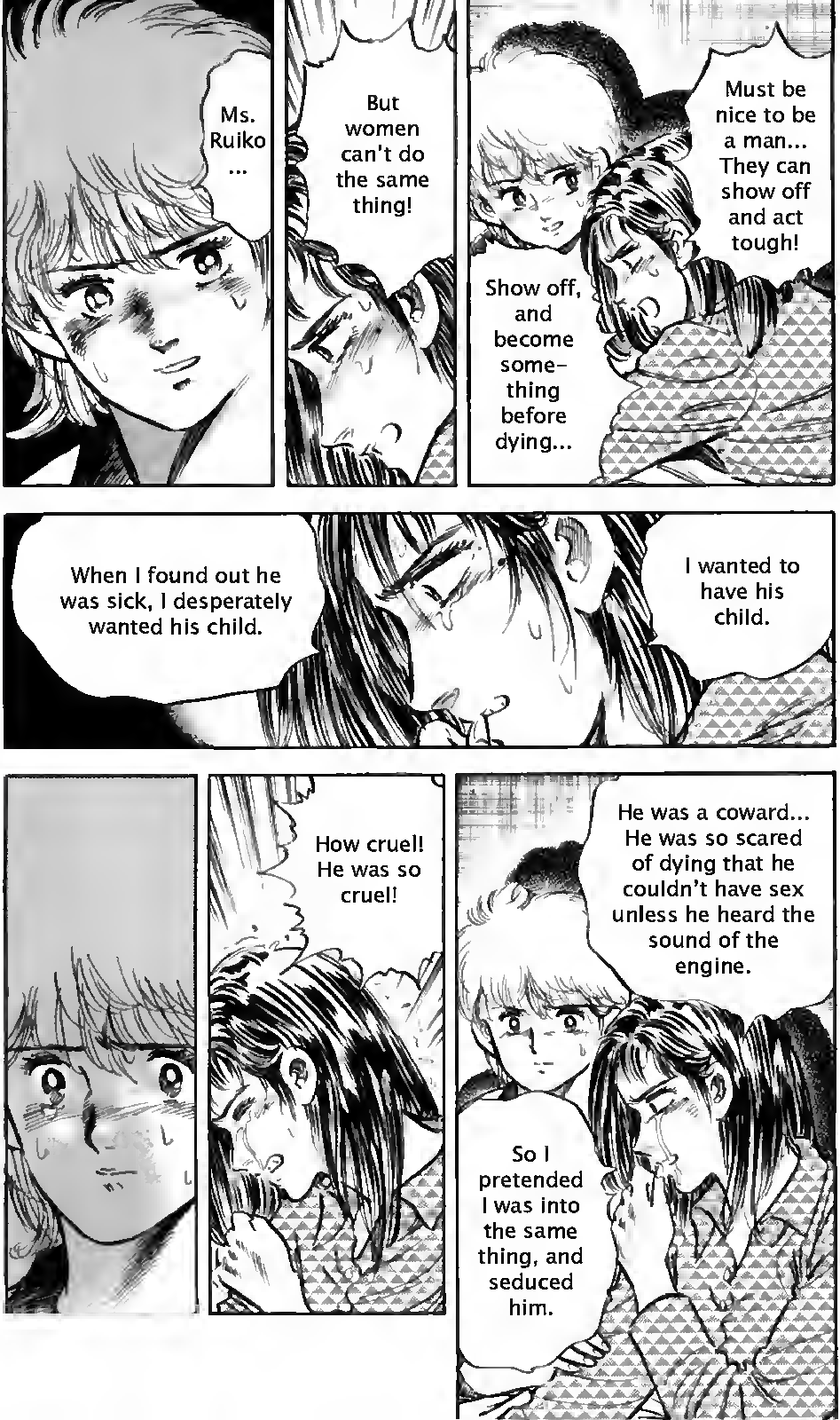

But I never felt lonely through all of that...
I did some work as a model too, going from one man to the next...


But today ...


I was born in Hokkaido.
As soon as I graduated I came to Tokyo and worked at bars and clubs...
When I was in high school, I got a room in Sapporo with a guy...

Here I am, far from Hokkaido, in some hospital in Mie in the bath... Just mixing in water all alone and not thinking of anything...
After being born in Hokkaido ...
20 years later...

How did this happen!? I...
What hap- pened!?
Why is that!?


Ms. Ruiko ...
But women can't do the same thing!
Must be nice to be a man... They can show off and act tough!
Show off, and become some-thing before dying...
When I found out he was sick, I desperately wanted his child.
I wanted to have his child.
How cruel! He was so cruel!
He was a coward... He was so scared of dying that he couldn't have sex unless he heard the sound of the engine.
So I pretended I was into the same thing, and seduced him.

Why didn't he leave anything behind for me!?

F

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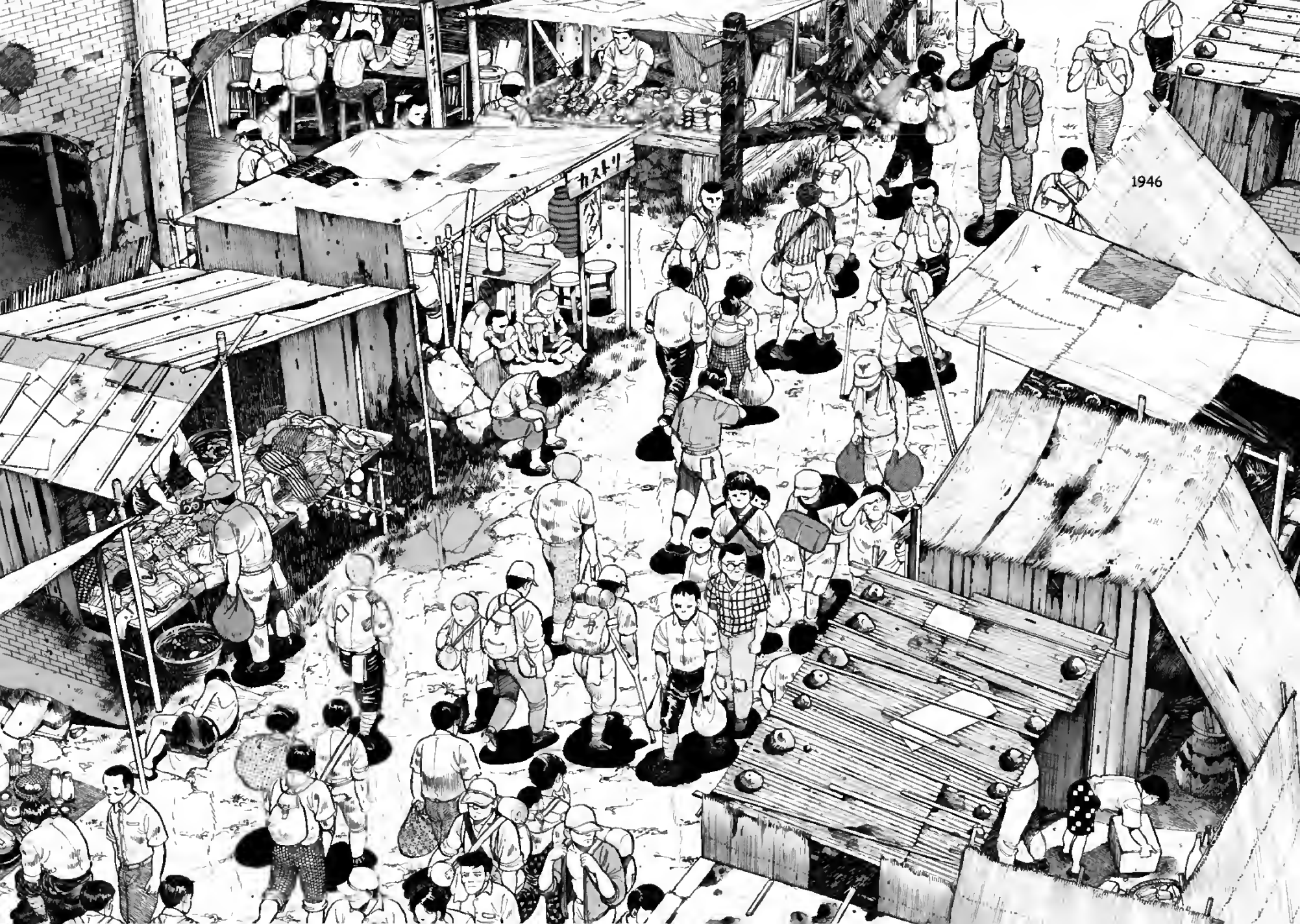
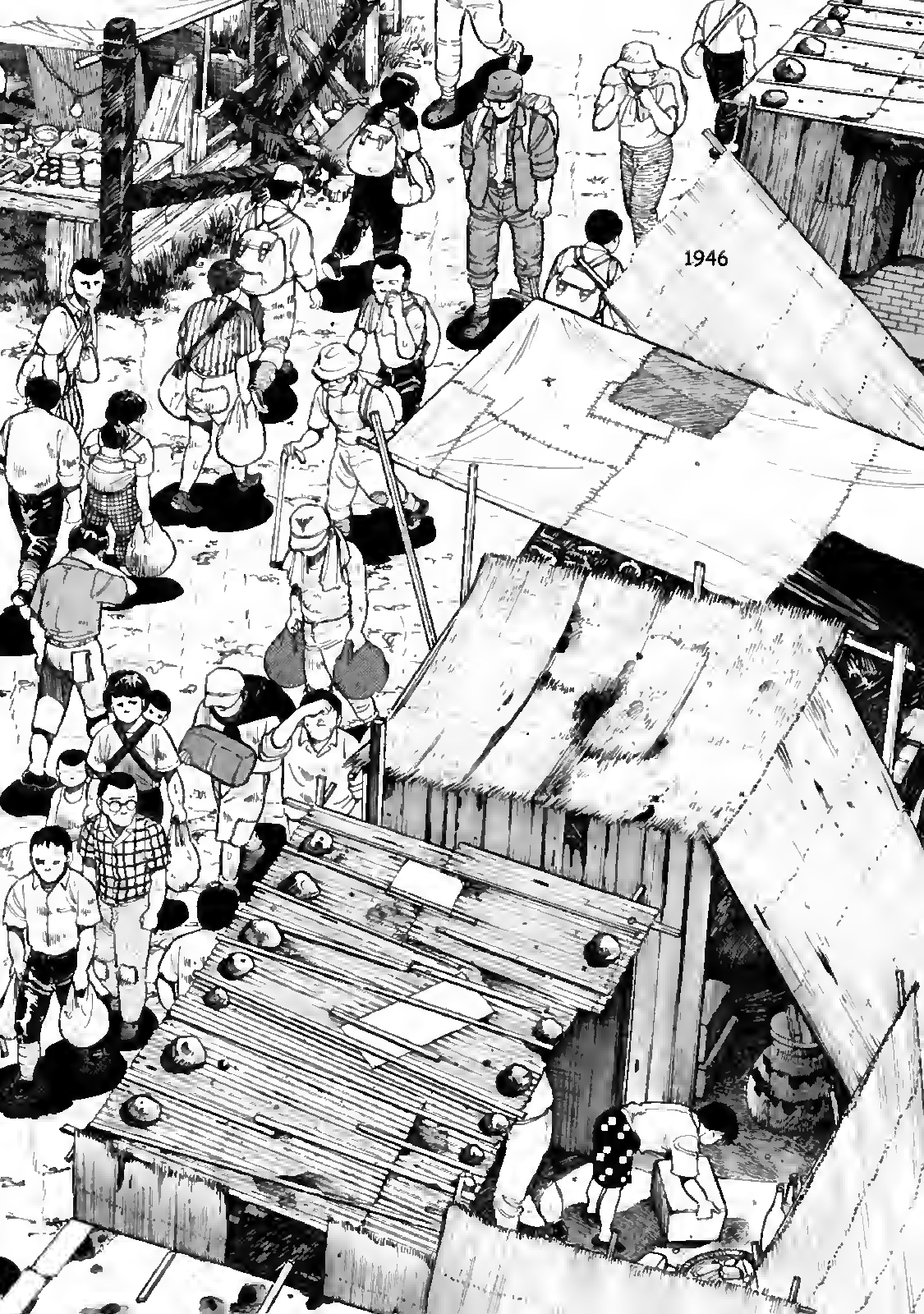
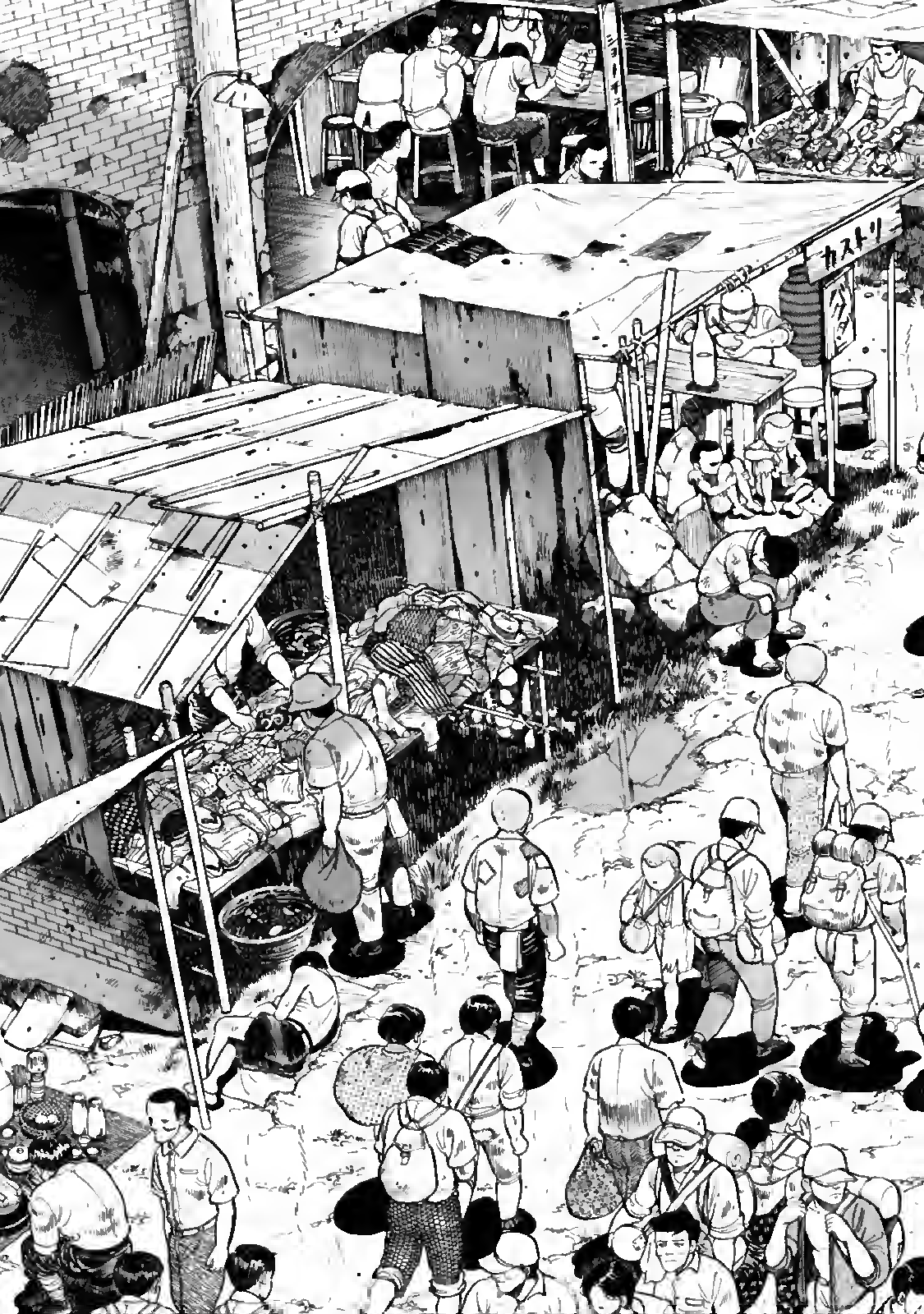
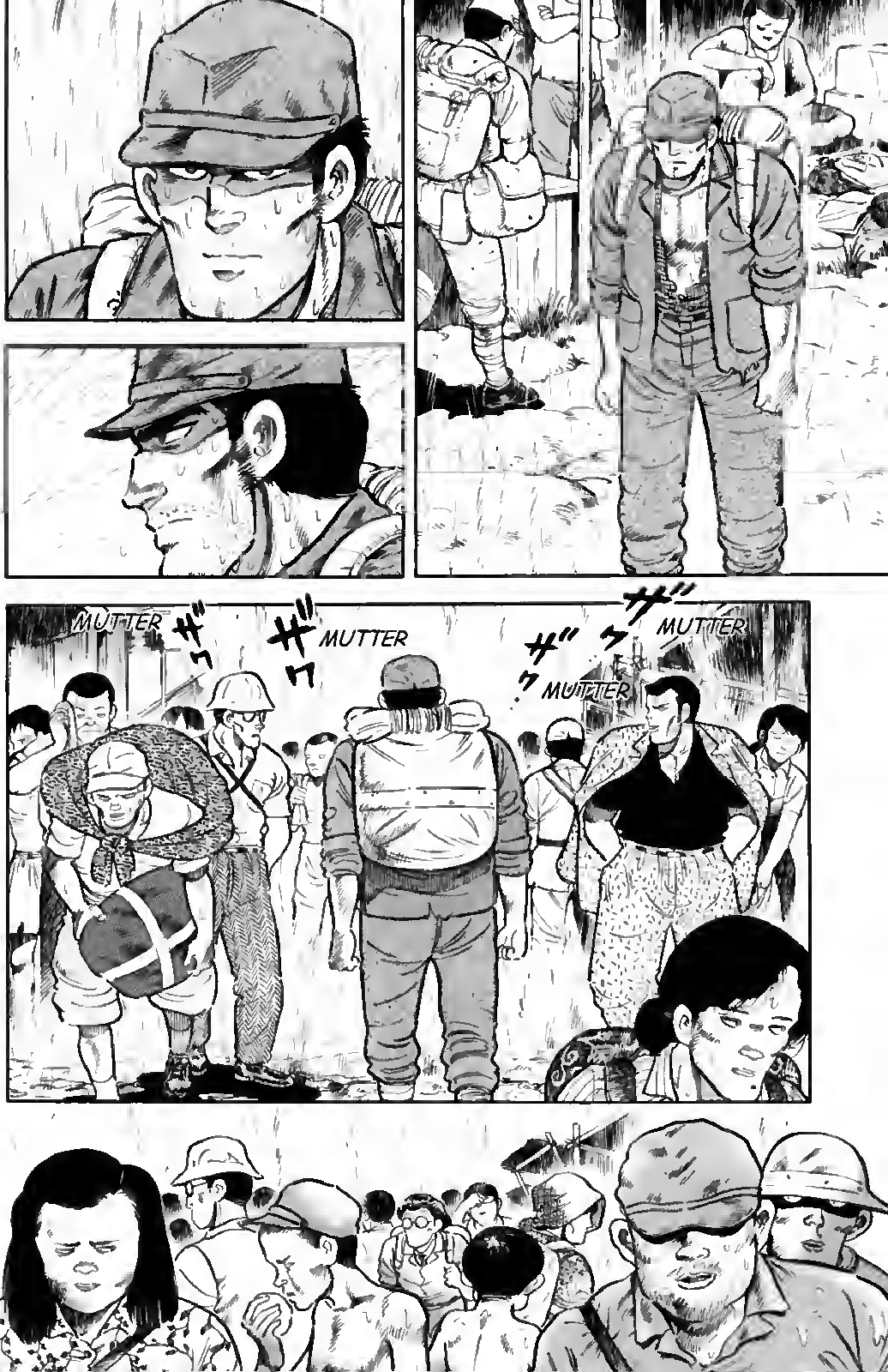
Chapter 5: Revival


カストリ
1946

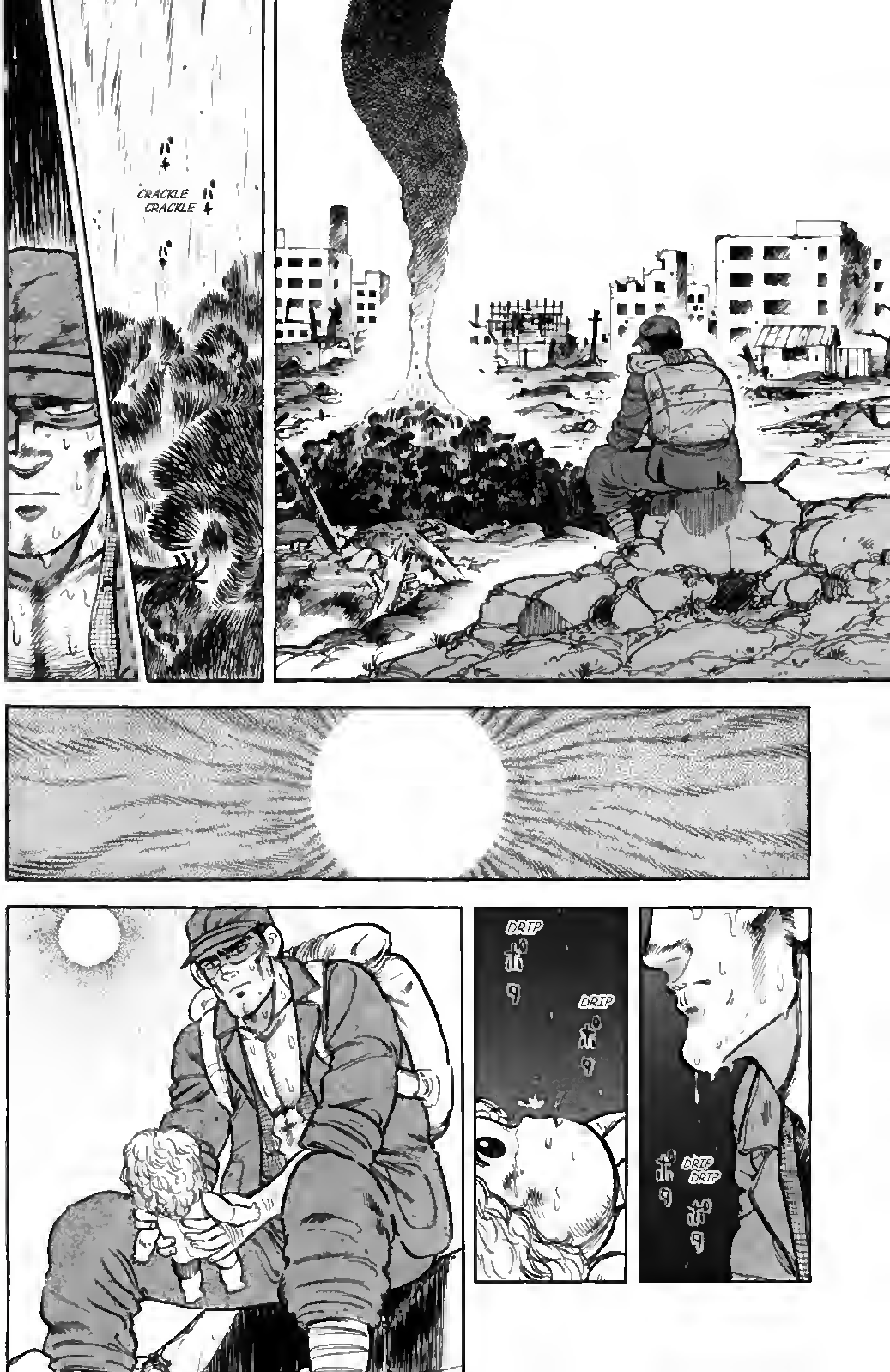

1946


カストリ


MUTTER
MUTTER
MUTTER
MUTTER

BUMP

Watch it,
moron!

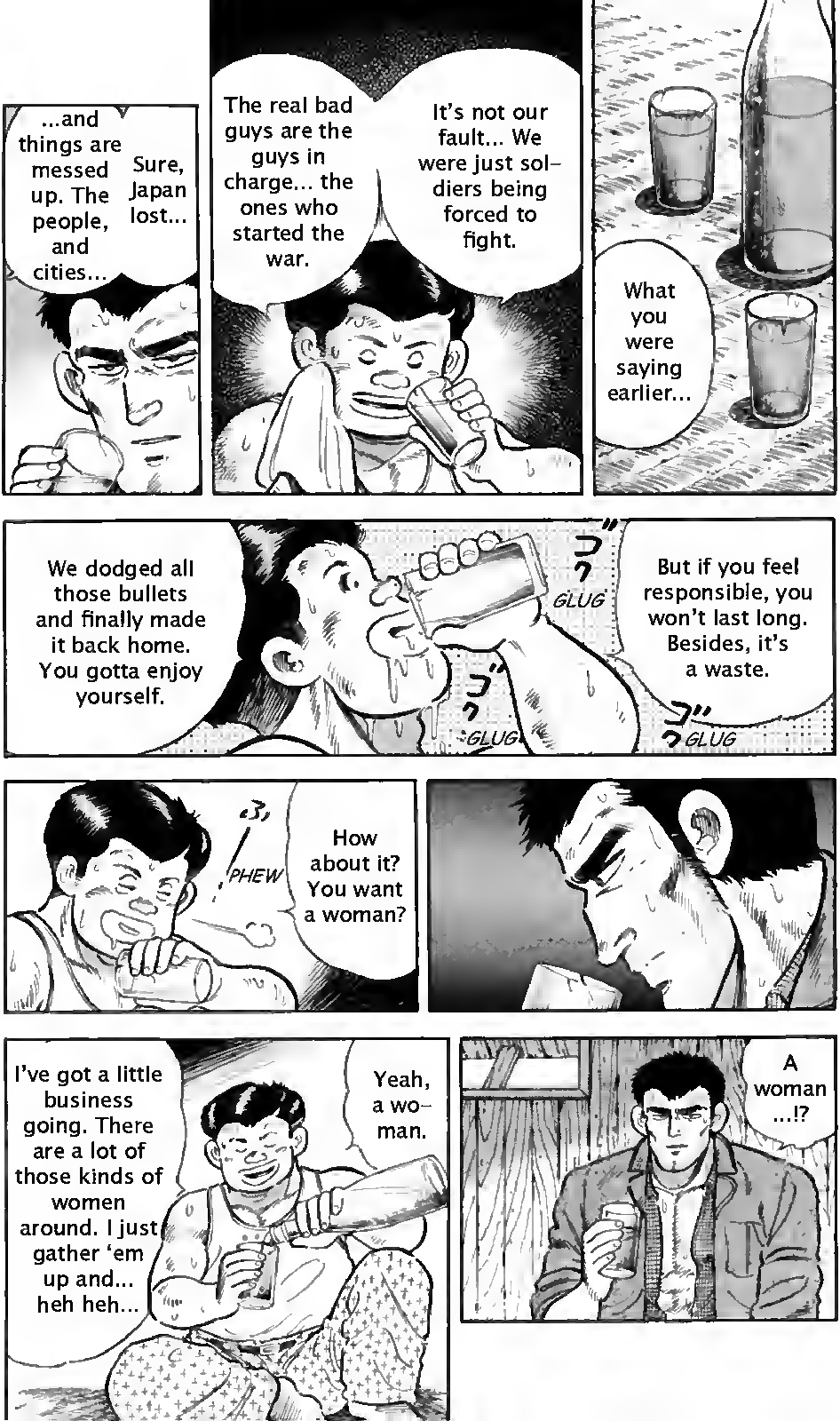

CRACKLE
CRACKLE
DRIP
DRIP
DRIP
DRIP

YAK
YAK
Mr. Akagi!
Is that Private First Class Akagi!?
It's me! Private Kasai. I was in the same squad...
How are things there!?
Sir, you were from Gunma... weren't you?
Did you go back?
FLAP FLAP
Tokyo sure has changed, hasn't it...?
FLAP FLAP

No... I haven't actually spoken to them yet...
That's great! Your family sure must have been happy to see you.
Yeah... I made sure my home and family were safe.
W-Why don't you go see your family, sir!?
I just watched from a distance, then came right back to
We aren't soldiers anymore...
Come on, stop calling me "sir" already.
Every day, I've just been wanderin' around like this...
For family, for country, we fought like mad. We took a lot of lives, lost the war...
Hey Kasai...
Then we came back, and we have this mess.
What did we do, anyways...?

It was meaning-less... Totally meaning-less!
What's even more pathetic... I didn't realize how meaning-less it was while we
What a pointless fight we got caught up in...
Those who survived, their hearts are stained and they just live for basic desires.
The buil-dings are wrecked, and there are bodies lying ev-erywhere.
...
How am I supposed to go back after that, happy that my family is safe!?
Where are you slee-ping? You got a place to stay?
I just lie down when I get tired of walking... By rubble or piles of bodies, doesn't matter where.
Then come to my place.
It's not pretty, but it keeps the rain off.
We have a lot to catch up on! Come on.
Sir... I mean, Mr. Akagi...

!
I'm back...
SMACK
And bring a wash-cloth too!
Get some booze! We've got an impor-tant guest.
Is that your wife...?
Man, it's sure hot...
FLAP
FLAP
...
FLAP
FLAP
She has no relatives, and she's a little funny in the head...
Hell of a woman though, heh heh...
Naw, I just saved her from some American sol-diers that were causing trouble.


...and things are messed up. The people, and cities...
Sure, Japan lost...
The real bad guys are the guys in charge... the ones who started the war.
It's not our fault... We were just soldiers being forced to fight.
What you were saying earlier...
We dodged all those bullets and finally made it back home. You gotta enjoy yourself.
GLUG
GLUG
But if you feel responsible, you won't last long. Besides, it's a waste.
GLUG
PHEW
How about it? You want a woman?
I've got a little business going. There are a lot of those kinds of women around. I just gather 'em up and... heh heh...
Yeah, a woman.
A woman ...!?

So you're a pimp?
But there are a lot of other nice girls. How about it?
But not that one, she's all mine.
If the occupying troops had their way, the ladies wouldn't make enough. They've got to make a living, after all...
Of course not. I just act as a mediator to ensure the ladies get a fair deal.
Come on... What kind of a person do you think I am?
Thanks, but no. I'm not interested right now.
Don't worry. I won't take any money from you. Leave it to me, you'll feel like a new man.
Simple folk like us have to keep up as the world changes, and stick it out.
No need for us plebs to feel responsible for what the government did.
Come on, no need to be such a stick in the mud.
The war's over, we're free now.

You're third-rate...
If you take desire away from people, you got nothing left! Desire is the source of energy for us lowly commoners! Hooray for desire!
That black market... That's where reconstruction starts.
Look at the black market.
You may think it is a bunch of scum chasing their desires, but that's not true!
At this rate, even if Japan recovers it will just end up going to war again some day...
I said you're third-rate...
What?
...
Good-bye...
It stinks.
I can't drink this...
ボタ
SPLASH
ボタ
SPLASH
ボタ
SPLASH

!
CRUNCH
TWITCH
Is that your mom...?

How's this!?
Don't be scared. Here, I'll give you something nice.
Shizue, that's a pretty name...
What's your name?
SQUIRM SQUIRM
C'mon, let's go get something to eat.
FWOOP
Your mom is tired. Let her get some rest.

Little girl, come over
Here, give that girl something to eat.
ゴッ
THUNK
C'mon, eat up.
...
ガー
MUNCH
MUNCH
MUNCH
Hey brother, let's have a chat.

Don't worry about it! Eat whenever you have the chance.

Shut up and walk, buddy!
Who are you people ...?

!
Huh!? I'm talkin' to you,
So, you had to go and insult Mr. Kasai, did ya?
Heh heh heh heh.

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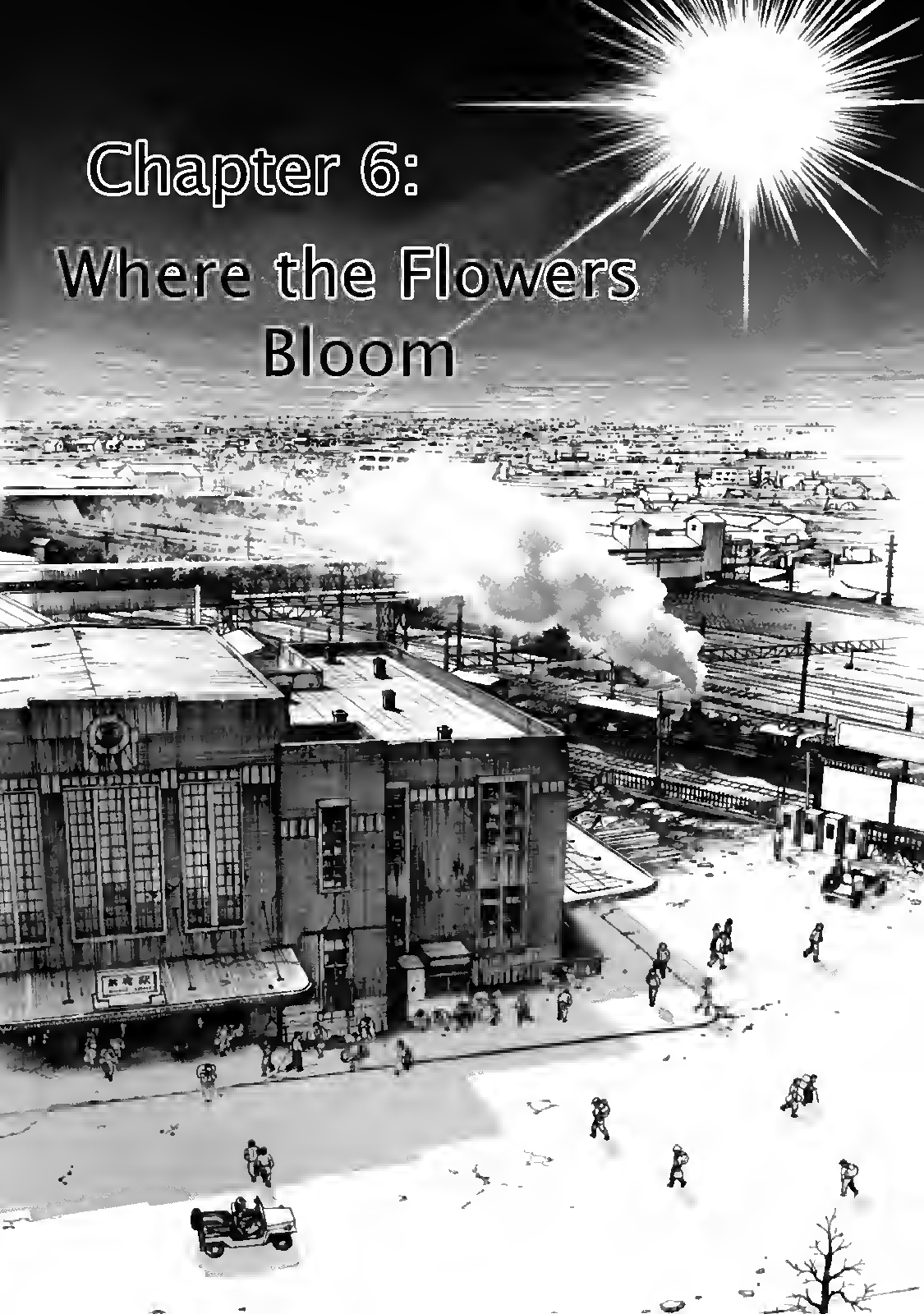
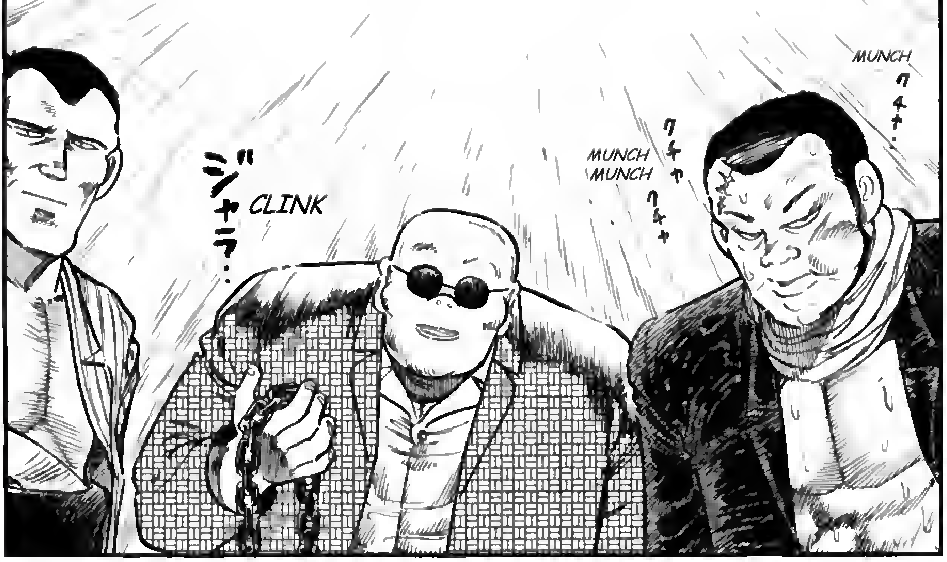
Chapter 6: Where the Flowers Bloom




MUNCH
ｸｬｯ
MUNCH
MUNCH
ｸｬｯ
ｸｬｯ
ジャラ…
CLINK

You're following Kasai's orders, then!?

Damn Kasai... How point-less...
FLASH
Please, try not to get yourself killed.
SWOOSH
Sorry, Akagi, sir, but we're gonna have to hurt ya...

Get 'im!

Was that veteran your dad?
If not, don't worry and hurry up and eat!
That poor soldier... No one gets away from those guys without paying for it.
...

SMACK
Raarr!
Heh!
Arrgh!
CLUNK

Ooof!
CRACK
SPURT
...in this pointless fight...?
SPLAT
Am I going to die...

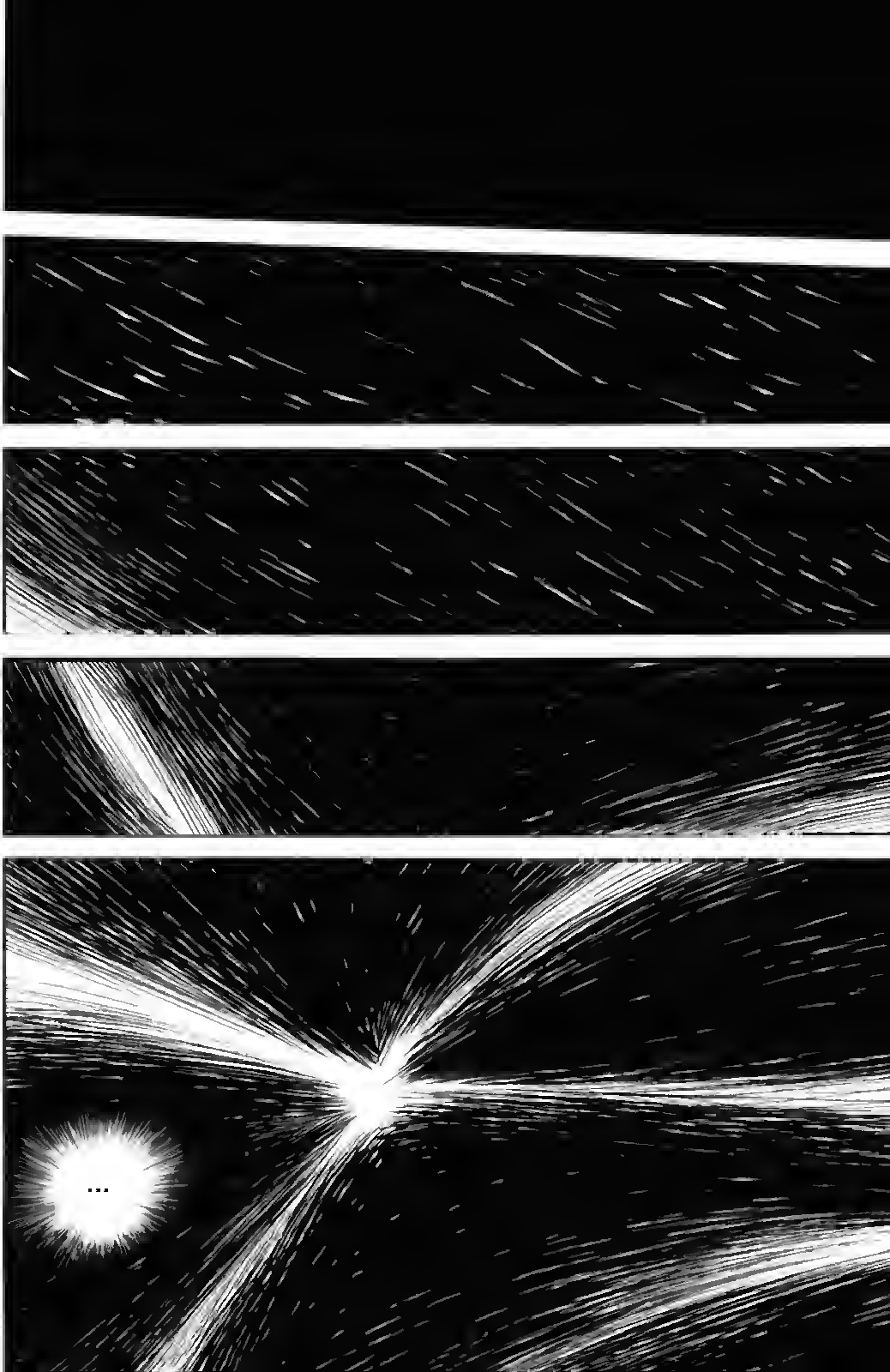
WUMP
ズ
Right... I gave it...
...to that dealer, so that girl could eat something...
My pistol...
My pi...

ガラ
CLANK

Oh well, I guess this is my punish-ment.
No luck...

...this is my punish-ment from God...
For being part of the pointless battle that ruined Japan...

CRACK
パキ



Ugh...
...
So... I guess I must be alive...
I see...
It's... you...

You're like... a flower blooming in hell...
You're Shizue...
Shizue ...

You're Shizue...
Shizue ...

You're like... a flower
blooming in hell...

WOBBLE
ヒョっ…
WOBBLE
ヒョっ…
WOBBLE
ヒョっ…
CLENCH
…
You just wait here...
I'll go get some money for you to live on.
Don't worry, I won't die... Thanks to you, I've found the strength to live.

Who's there!?
Wh...
バターン
SLAM
Mr. Akagi...
Ah, ah...
Ah ...
Hey Kasai... It's me.
Yeah... Some thugs jumped me for some reason...
A... a favor...? But... wait, what happened to you? Why are you injured...?
Sorry about barging in... I've got a little favor to ask you...
CREAK

What were you gonna grab, huh? Kasai.
Don't move!
Thugs? Wow... Uhh, that's terrible. Let's treat those wounds.
I'd like you to get me a woman.
W-Why, medicine of course, disinfectant... sir.
A woman ...!?
Don't waste your time, I'm fine. Anyway...
No, I can't wait. That woman will do.
W-Well then, no problem. I'll send someone to get you two or three right away...
That's right. I'm suddenly in the mood now.

Or are you going to refuse no matter what, Kasai?
Naw, she's just my type. I'll have her...
GRIN
Th-This is my woman... Sir, I can't let you... Besides, she's dirty...
B...But, no, you see... This woman is, ha ha ha...
TREMBLE
TREMBLE
Heh... Can you even do it...? I mean, with all those injuries...
If I can't make her come, then you can have my mountain in the country as payment. But if she says I'm better than you...
How about it, Kasai...? Want to make a bet?

Haha... Cut the bad jokes... My life...?
I'm serious!
How's that!?
...well... I'll take your life...!
...
All right... Sounds interesting.
You're on!
SLIP
FLOP

BAM
Ahhh
...
It... It's huge...
Oh... uh... Whoa...

F

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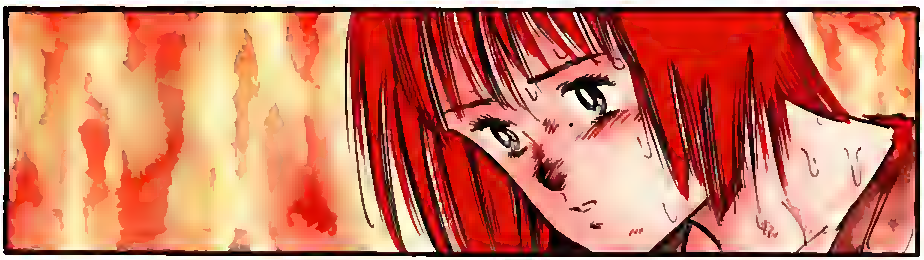
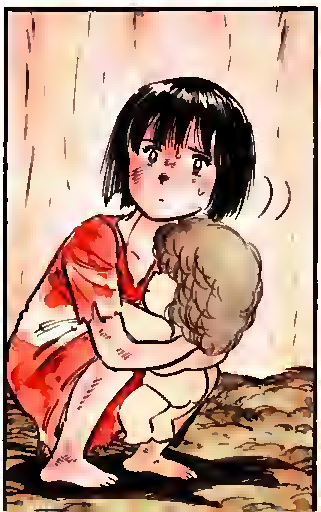
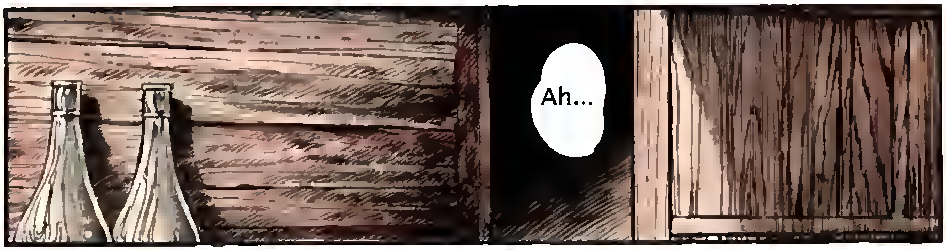
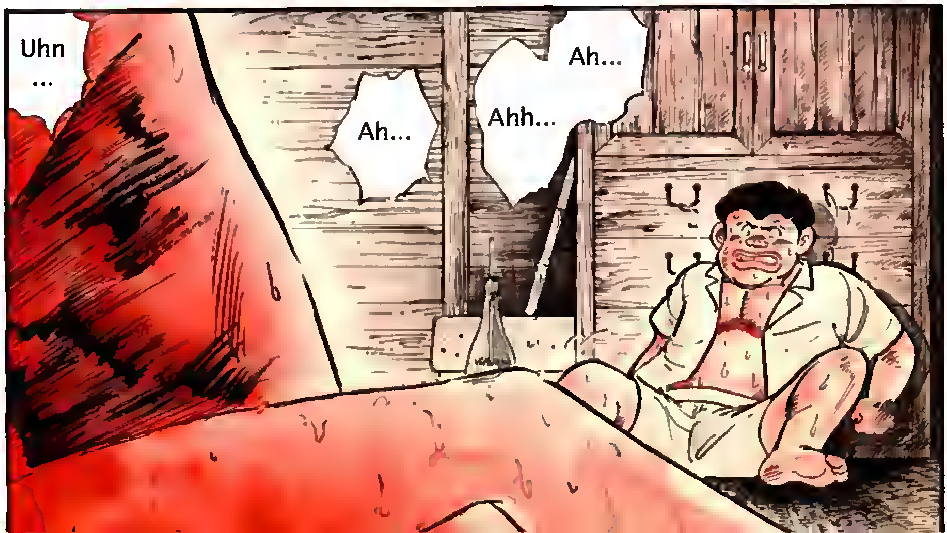
Chapter 7:
Time Goes On
GUNMA.A
elf
Arai
NGK






Ah...


Uhn ...
Ah...
Ah...
Ahh...

Ah, uhhn!
SPURT
SPURT

Do you like it!? Woman!
Uhn, uh, uh!
Please ... stop.
I'm done ...
Answer me!
Uhn, oh! Ahhh ...!
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
No! I'm not done until you answer!
Who's better? Me or Kasai!? Say it!
YANK

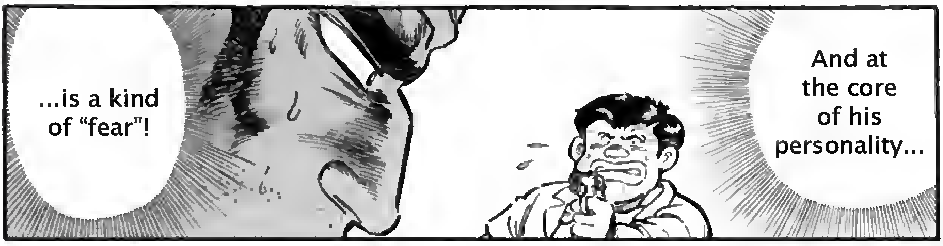
CLAT-
TER
PHEW
Ha... That man is nothing ...
...com-pared to you...
You're way, way better...
GRIN
BANG

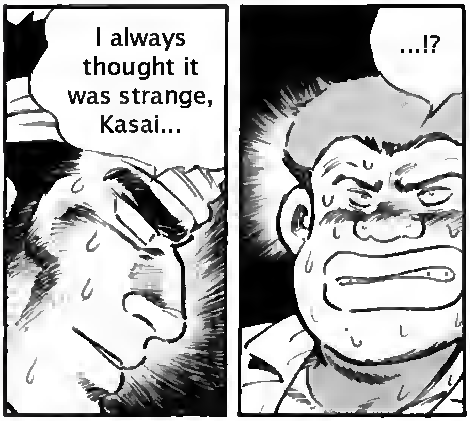
SPLAT
I'll kill you! I'll kill the both of you!
Ha... Die... Die... Die!
You just said he's way better! I rescued you! Did you forget that, you slut!?
Shut up you whore! What did you just say!?
D-Don't kill me... I... I love you. So please, I'm begging!
Hey! Stop it... darling...

Third-rate!? Ha! Who are you to call me third-rate!?
How dare you shame me! After I found you, begging at the feet of those soldiers like that...
Mr. Akagi, the same with you!
Ha... ha ha ha ha...
CLENCH
I'm not gonna be called third-rate by an idiot like you! Damn fool, wandering around acting all de-pressed! It may not be pretty, but I'm sure living more than you are!
You may have been my supe-rior on the battlefield, but now the war's over we're just people!
He's really gonna shoot...
BANG
Shut up and die!
I'll do any-thing!
Pl-Please, don't!

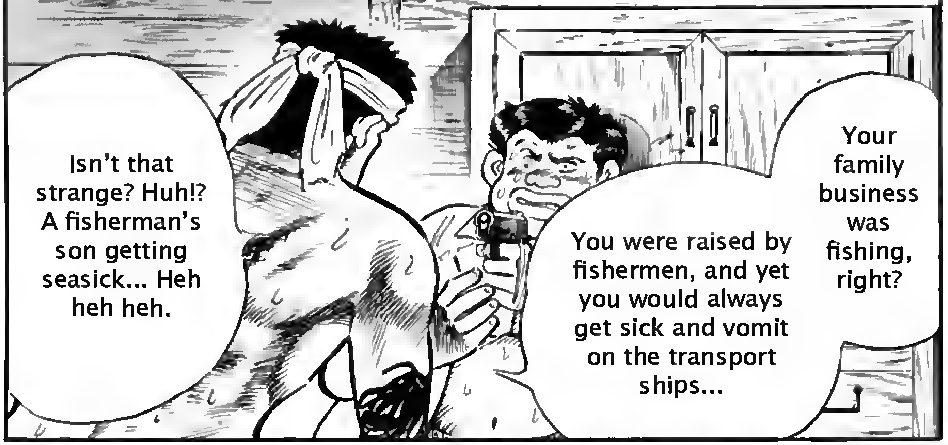
GLUB
GLUB
Ah...
THWAP
GLARE
Spare the girl... Kasai...
Come on, now ...
STUMBLE
Damn ...
Ahhh!

No, not pride... Probably the way he was raised.
He's calculating, but emtional... and might do anything when angry.
Shooting me isn't enough...?
DRIP
DRIP
This guy's a sneaky coward, but he's got a lot of pride.


...is a kind of "fear"!
And at the core of his personality...

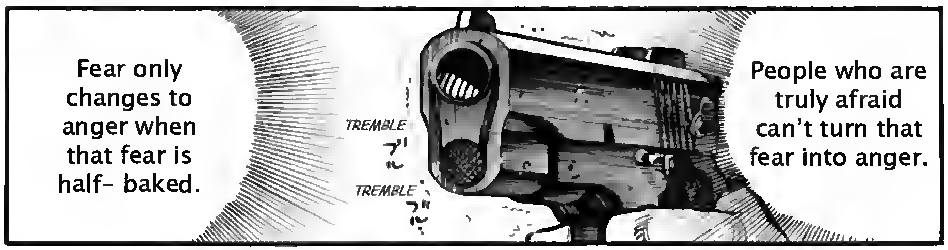

I always thought it was strange, Kasai...
...!?

Why haven't you gone home either? Why are you living in the rubble of Tokyo?
...Hey, Kasai...Weren't you from a fishing village in Chiba...?


Isn't that strange? Huh!? A fisherman's son getting seasick... Heh heh heh.
You were raised by fishermen, and yet you would always get sick and vomit on the transport ships...
Your family business was fishing, right?

Go on, Kasai. Shoot me. What's the matter?

...


Fear only changes to anger when that fear is half- baked.
TREMBLE
TREMBLE
People who are truly afraid can't turn that fear into anger.

If you aren't gonna shoot, then I'll take your life...!
Can't you shoot? Huh?
Like I promised, I made her come.

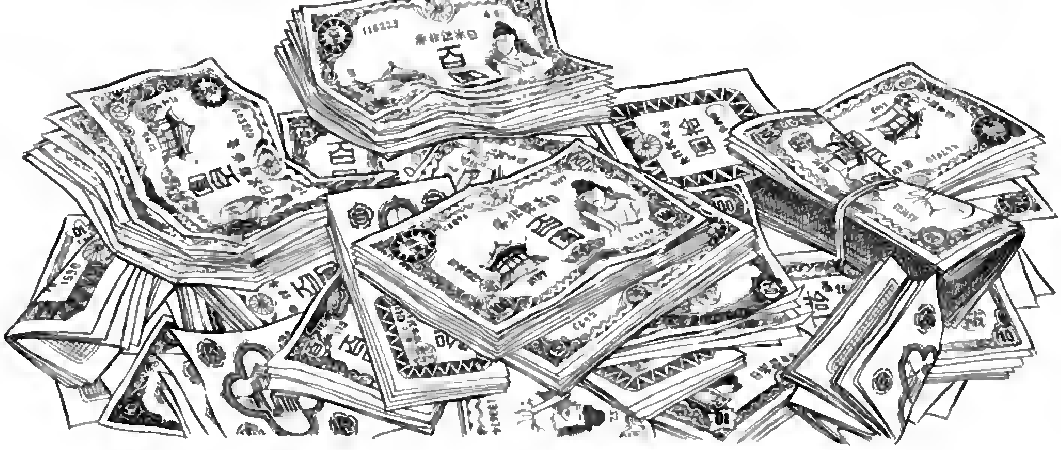
When he pulls the trigger...
I'm driven to action by...
...a raging flame...
...and a frozen ocean in my body!
...he'll hesi-tate for a split se-cond...
I-I have a gun pointed right at your head. If... If you make me angry... You... You know what'll happen.
D-Don't you understand the situation you're in!?
I may be pathetic... The sea scares me, I can't help it... so that's why...

Third-rate!

TWITCH
Grargh!
BANG
SMASH
CLUNK
SMACK
CRACK

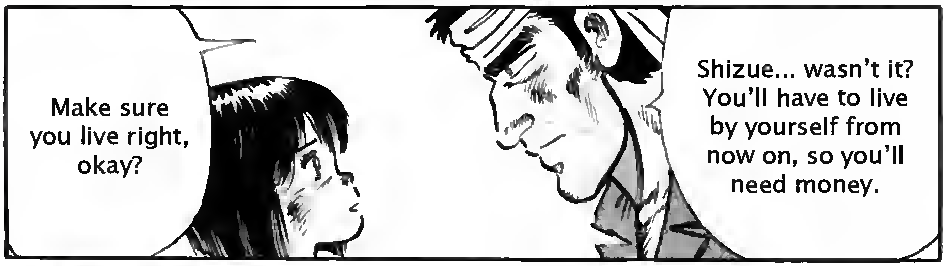
Ahhh!
SPLAT
Ahhh!
SLAM

!
SIGH
I'll show you how to live a first-rate life!
From now on, your life is mine. So come with me.
As promised, I'll take your life.
Kasai ...



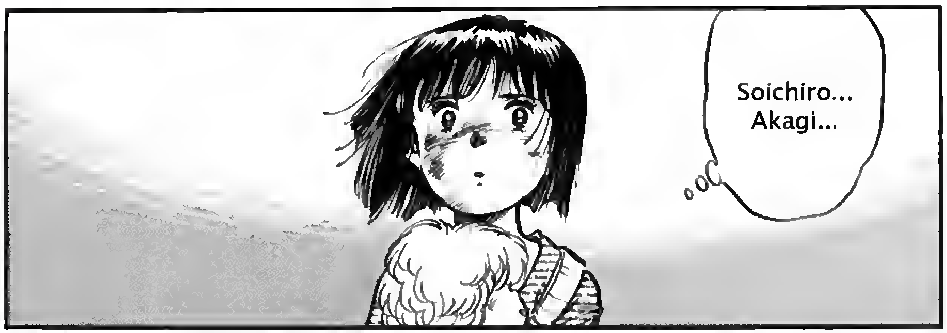
...
Don't worry about it. Take it.
Here, this is all yours.

Okay.
RUSTLE
Th-That's all of it...


Make sure you live right, okay?
Shizue... wasn't it? You'll have to live by yourself from now on, so you'll need money.

Akagi ...

...but I'll never forget you.
My name is Soichiro Akagi. I doubt we'll meet again...

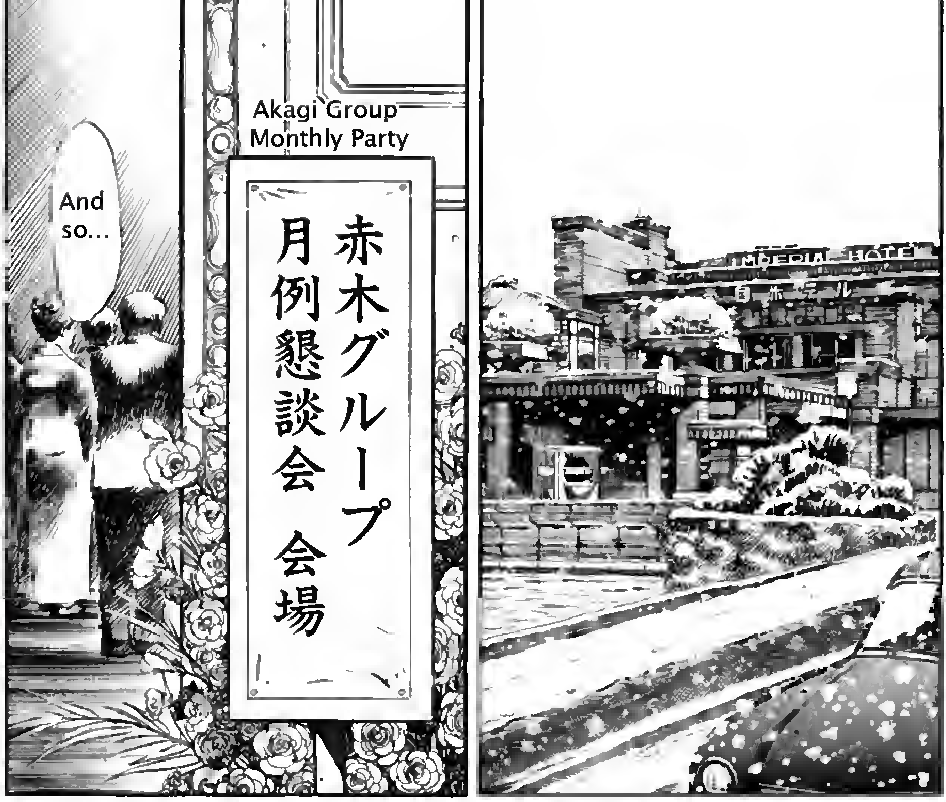

Soichiro...
Akagi...

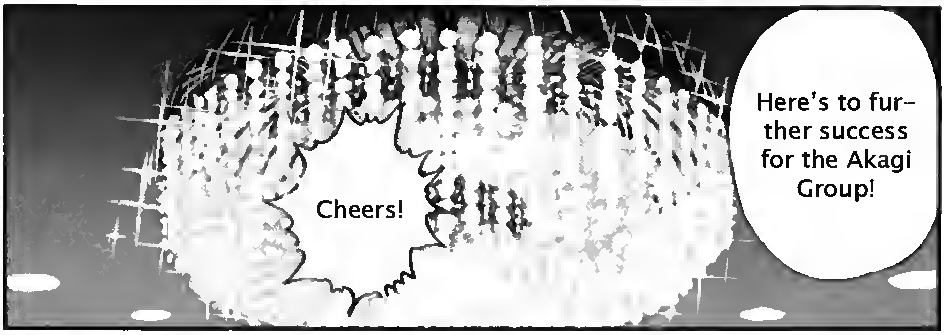
F

Vol.8

Chapter 8:
Turning Point

1963

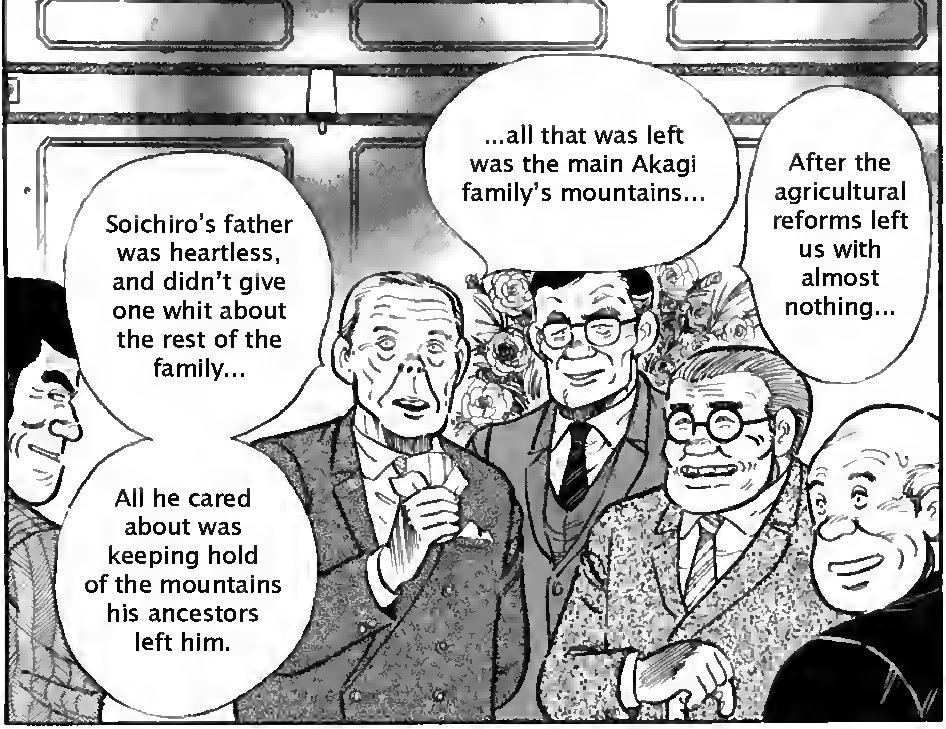

Akagi Group
Monthly Party
赤木グループ
月例懇談会 会場
And
so...
IMPERIAL HOTEL
帝国ホテル


Cheers!
Here's to fur-
ther success
for the Akagi
Group!

ガヤ
YAK
ガヤ
YAK

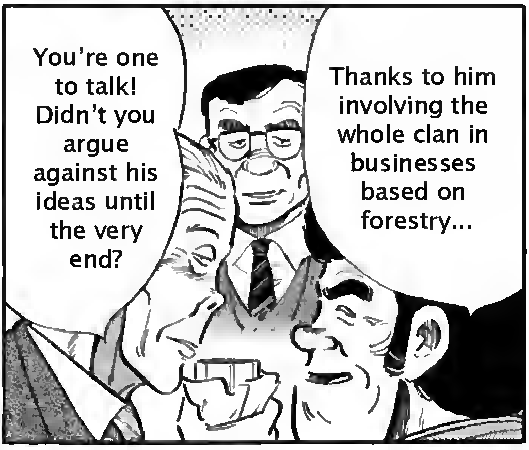
Wow. You really surprised me, Soichiro.
Dear ...
The lobby is just full of foreigners...
Uncle Tatsu.
Holding the monthly party in the Imperial Hotel... My, that sure gave me a shock.
HA HA HA はは
...but I just can't seem to act like a dignified businessman... Sorry...
I may be good at making money...
Oh, right. Very sorry.
Just have fun.
Just relax, this is the final party of the year.

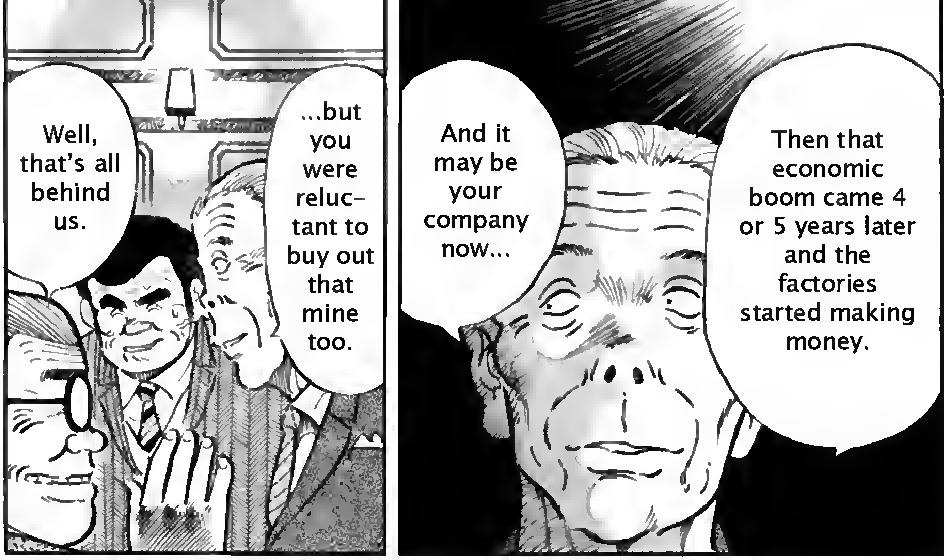
HA HA HA
Representative Shirai has arrived.
President Akagi ...
I'll be right there.
Hey!
Yes, sir.
We'll talk later, Kasai.
Pretty impressive work by little Soichiro...
He's hardly little anymore.
But he really has changed a lot since he returned from the war.


Soichiro's father was heartless, and didn't give one whit about the rest of the family...
All he cared about was keeping hold of the mountains his ancestors left him.
...all that was left was the main Akagi family's mountains...
After the agricultural reforms left us with almost nothing...

Very true...
If Soichiro, the only child, hadn't come back then there's no telling what would have become of us...

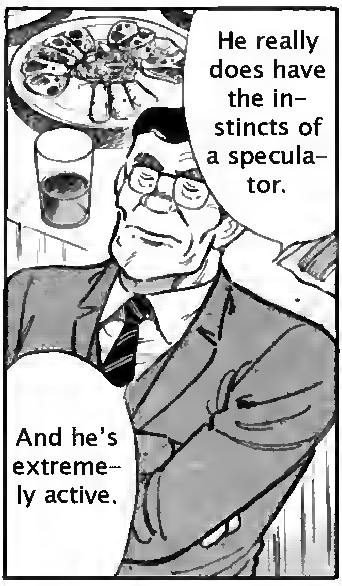
...you argued there was no point in buying that junk.
When Soichiro bought all those munitions factories burned in the war...

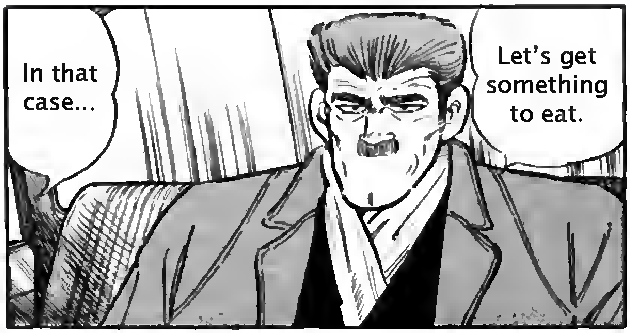

You're one to talk! Didn't you argue against his ideas until the very end?
Thanks to him involving the whole clan in businesses based on forestry...


Well, that's all behind us.
...but you were reluctant to buy out that mine too.
And it may be your company now...
Then that economic boom came 4 or 5 years later and the factories started making money.

...and didn't have the kind of foresight that Soichiro did...
We were desperate just to find work...
Honestly, no one here agreed with Soichiro at the beginning.

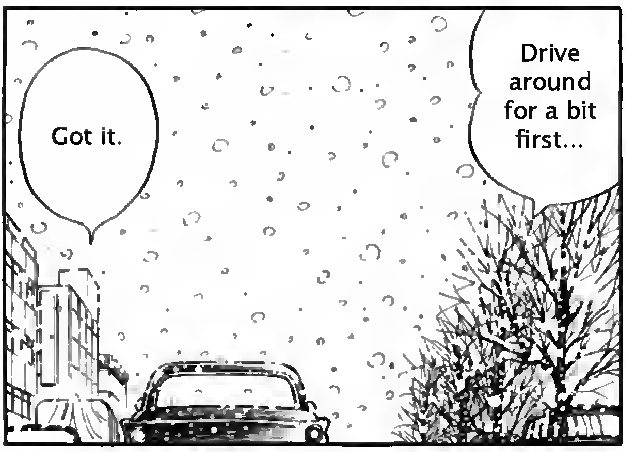
Even though his first son Shoma was just born, he's got women everywhere he goes...
Oh, rumor has it he's active, that's for sure.
You're just jealous. Women can't keep themselves off a successful man like him.


He really does have the instincts of a speculator.
And he's extremely active.


In that case...
Let's get something to eat.

There's someone I'd like you to meet there.
Do you want to go to a place I know?

Hmm ...


Got it.
Drive around for a bit first...

Plans?

And so do we...

The war, the confusion that followed, now this prosperity... Japan keeps changing...
The Tokyo Olympics are next year...

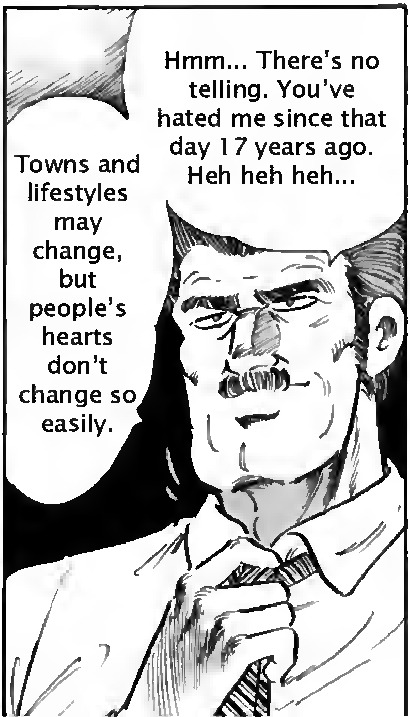
This is a nice place.
You come often?
No, once in a while, when I'm in Tokyo on business.

Restaurant Matsukawa

...I'm a distant relative of the manager, so I get a discount...
N-Not at all...
Ha... I can tell you're up to no good.

STARE
... when it comes to hate.
Especially ...

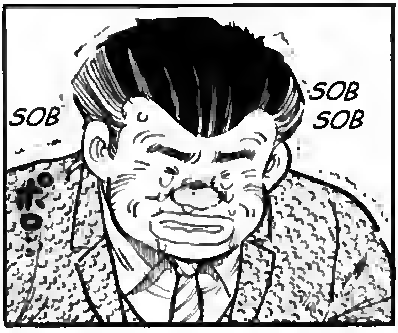
M...Mr. Akagi...
...


Hmm... There's no telling. You've hated me since that day 17 years ago. Heh heh heh...
Towns and lifestyles may change, but people's hearts don't change so easily.

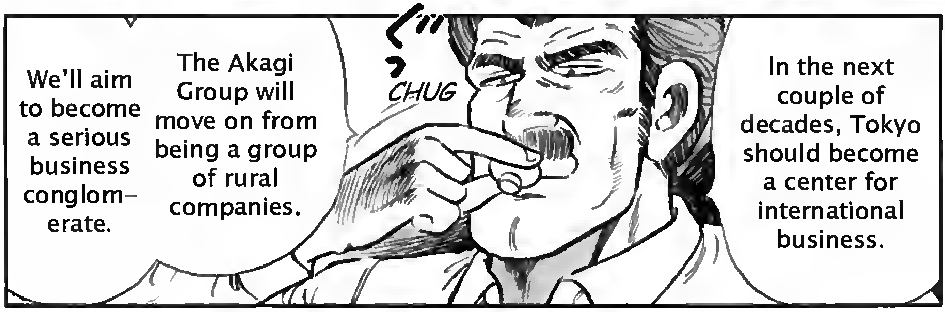
I don't even know myself if I still hate you now.
No... I do hate you... I probably do hate you. But to the same degree, I respect you.
M...Mr. Akagi, you can think whatever you want of me...
After all, I did try to kill you once 17 years ago.

So I... I've done my best until now, and I still will in the future, working for you...
These past 17 years living along with you, I... I feel I've learned what it means to live like a man.
It's true. I'm not lying.

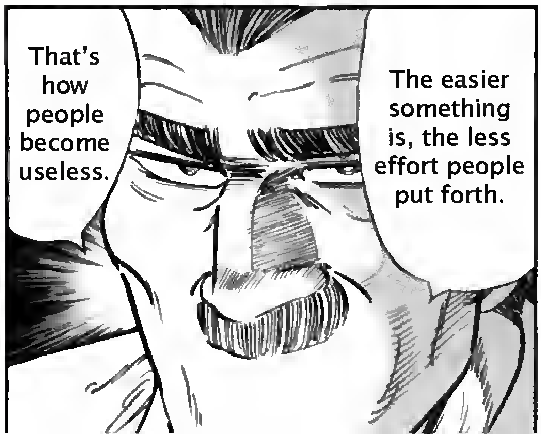
...

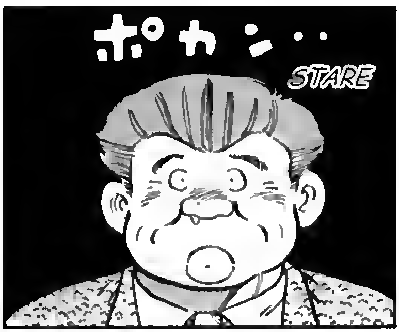

SOB
SOB
SOB

The Olympics will bring change to Tokyo.
From there, we'll start an even more diversified strategy.
!
Next year, the Akagi Group head office will be built in Tokyo.


We'll aim to become a serious business conglom-erate.
The Akagi Group will move on from being a group of rural companies.
CHUG
In the next couple of decades, Tokyo should become a center for international business.

No shame in coming before managing to make her orgasm.
GRIN
That woman 17 years ago was good. I haven't been with one that good since then.


That's how people become useless.
The easier something is, the less effort people put forth.


STARE

Don't worry about insulting the Akagi clan. Blood is thicker than water, but the color and stench of blood make it hard to tell what is necessary.
I'll give you one of our subsidiaries. Doesn't matter which, pick one you like.

Mr. Akagi...!!
Mr...

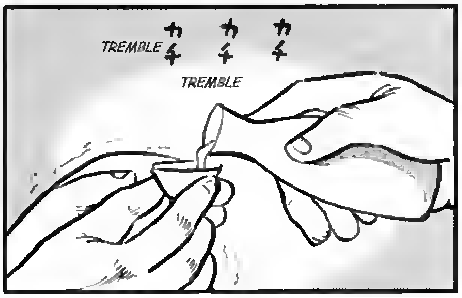
I promised you 17 years ago that I'd show you what a first-rate life was like.
The time has come to fulfill that promise...

The snow's stopped ...

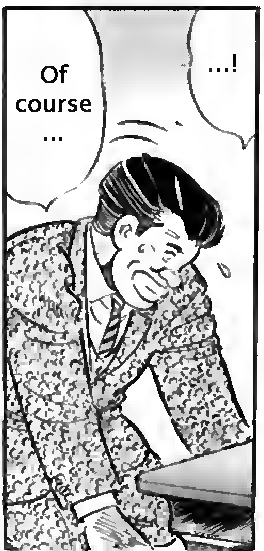
Roads get muddy and cling to your legs...
...once it starts melting, it's just a hassle...
Snow is best when it's falling...

Here, drink up.
Looks like I'll have to get dirty again...!

Thank you.

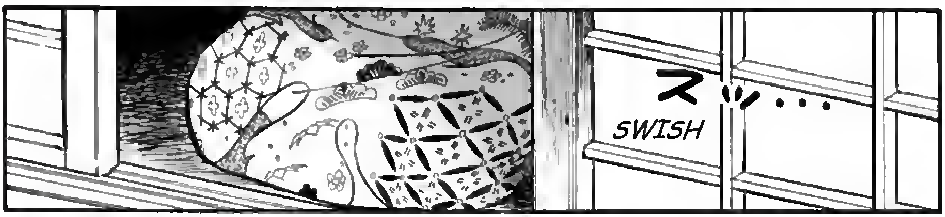

TREMBLE
TREMBLE

I'll be right back.


Of course ...
...!

So who was this person you wanted me to meet...?

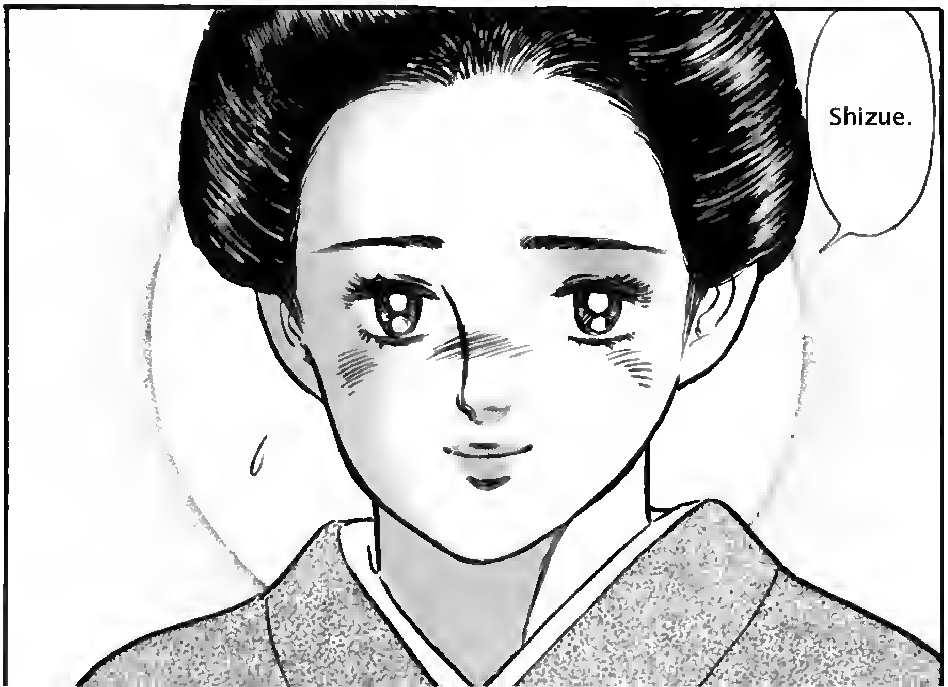
Excuse me.


SWISH

Hmm... Who were you again?
...
It's been a long time.

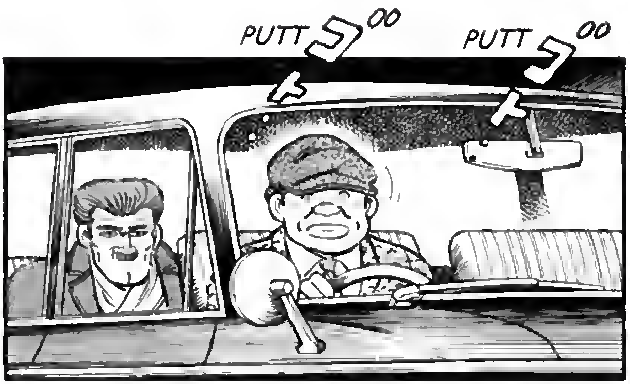
You gave this to me 17 years ago.

What was your name... ? Was it...
It... It's you... you're that...


Shizue.

F
Vol.8

Chapter 9: Journey


PUTT
PUTT

GLANCE
Shizue.

VROOM
SQUISH

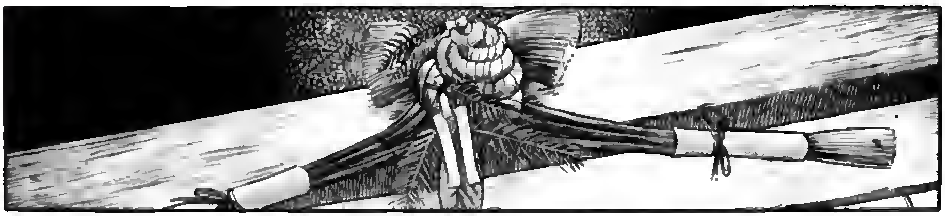
I wanted to thank you for what you did.
I had no idea who she was, but she still remembered me.
She started working at Matsukawa about two months ago...
BUMP
BUMP
The money you gave her was stolen right away.
She had a tough life.
She kept asking, and I wanted to have you meet with her as soon as possible... Sorry about surprising you...
BUMP
But she managed to live as a woman all alone... Even I can't help but feel happy about that.

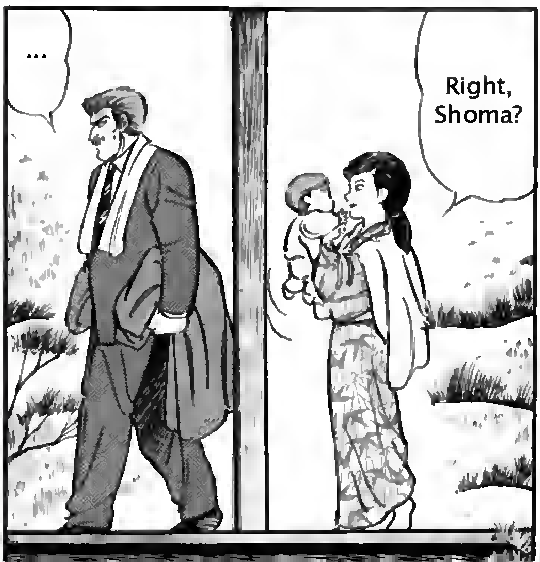
What is it...?
...
Oh my, you look like you've just seen a ghost... Hee hee...
Ah, no... It's noth-ing.
But the road is covered in snow.
Just stop. I feel like walking.
Huh!?
Stop. Let me off here.

Just go on ahead. Don't worry about me!
Boss!
Boss! Mr. Akagi!
SQUISH
SQUISH
WOOSH

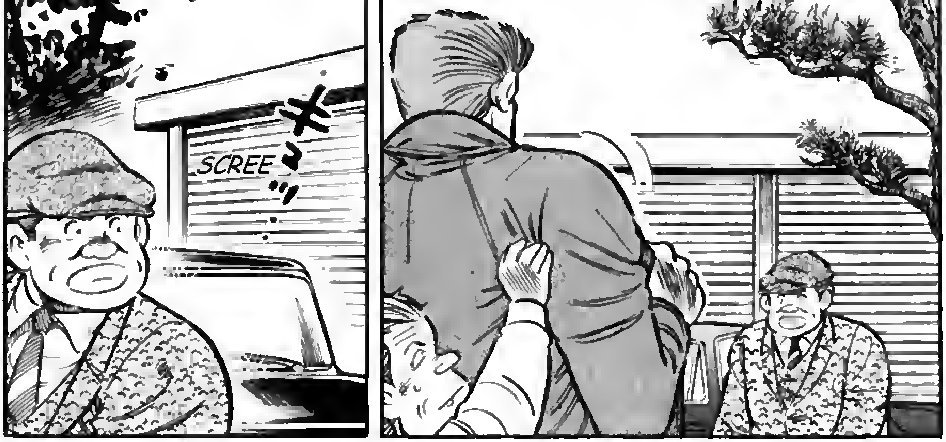
WOOSH
SQUISH
SQUISH
SWIFF
SWISH
SWISH
SLIP
SPLASH
SQUISH
SQUISH
Are you okay, boss?
SPLASH SPLASH SPLASH
B...Boss!
KERSPLASH

Ha...
Ha ha... Ha ha ha...
...
Look at me! Covered in mud, ha ha ha...
HA HA HA HA HA!
Look, Kasai! Mud everywhere! I can't take this... Ha ha ha!
Ha ha ha!
Ha ha ha ha ha!
?




...
Right, Shoma?

Are you going out again?
You could at least take a break for the New Year.


SCREE

...we could play a game of Go for the first time in a while ...
I was hoping that...

Hey Soichiro, you going out?

Good-bye.
We'll play Go again later... I'm busy with meetings for the head office building.
Uncle Tatsu, please make yourself at home and have a drink.

VRRRR

Uh... Okay...

That's right...
Matsu-kawa, I as-sume?
...about giving me a com-pany...
About what you said before...
Uncle Tatsu's ...!?
!
I'd like to take over Tagawa Zinc, if you don't mind.
Yeah ...
Uncle Tatsu is the most terrifying member of the Akagi clan...
Are you sure you want to do it?
Fine... but are you sure you want to make an enemy of him?
RATTLE
ガラン...

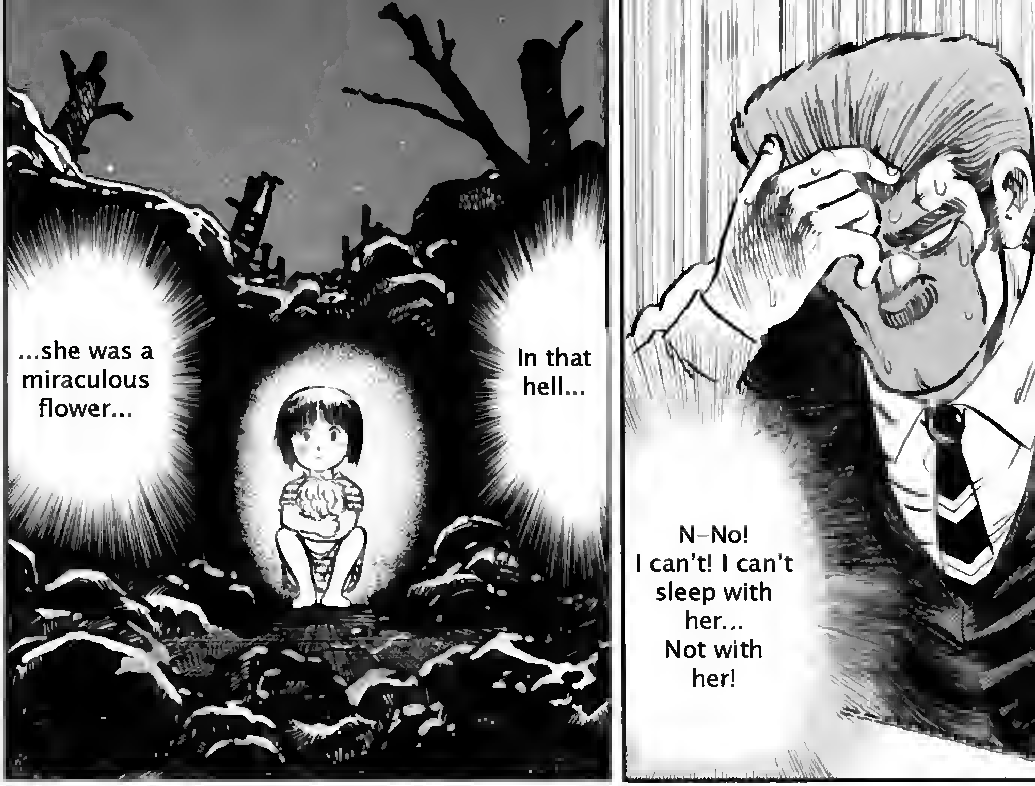
Al-
right.
...
You said it yourself, "The easier something is, the less effort people put forth. That's how people become useless."
VRRR
Your wife will get angry.
Restaurant Matsukawa
That means you're coming once every two days.
This is the seventh time you've come since December...
...it makes me feel cleansed.
Just seeing you like this...
Yes, but...
Why should she? It's not like I'm sleeping with you.

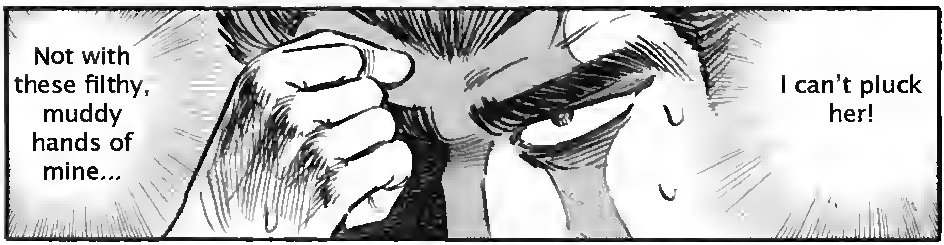
How awful!
HMPH
More or less, ha ha ha.
What am I, detergent!?
Hmph!
I'd like to take over Tagawa Zinc...
!?
How about going to some hot springs for a few days?
What does it matter? I'm just a detergent lady!
PTHT
What's wrong!? Are you crying...?

I want to see Shizue again!
I want to see her!

Yet it feels like it's been more than a year already.
Why...? I just saw her yesterday!

I want her...
THWUMP
What's wrong with me? I'm not a teenager anymore!
Damn it...


...she was a miraculous flower...
In that hell...
N-No! I can't! I can't sleep with her... Not with her!


Not with these filthy, muddy hands of mine...
I can't pluck her!

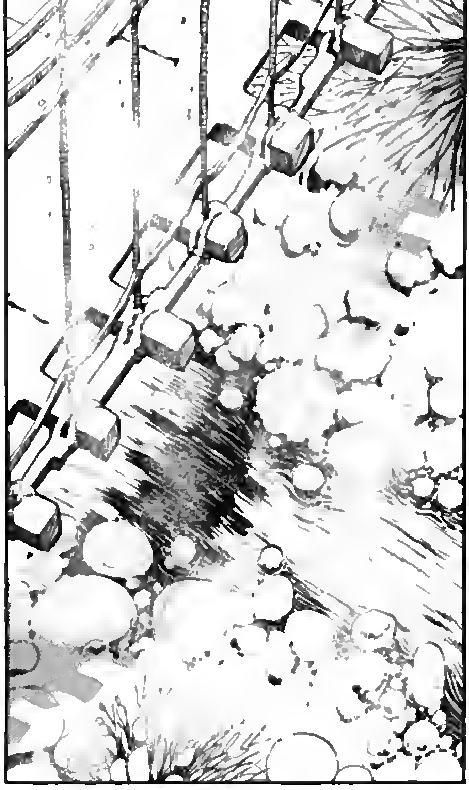
I'm so happy! It's been so long since I took a trip.
Thank you for taking the time... I know you're busy.
Oh, a tunnel!

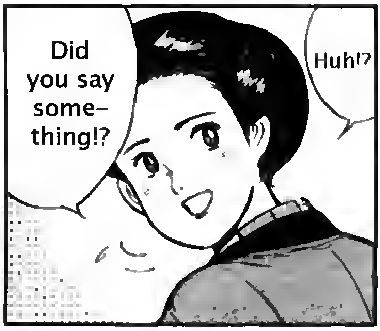
WOOOSH

CHUGGA
CHUGGA
CHUGGA
CHUGGA

F
Vol.8

Chapter 10: Under the Snow




Did you say some-thing!?
Huh!?

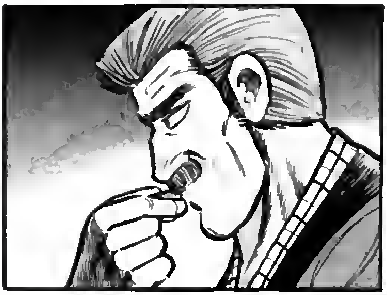
SPLISH
How strange ...

I don't think I've felt this relaxed for the past 17 years...

What's strange?
Yeah... I said it's strange.

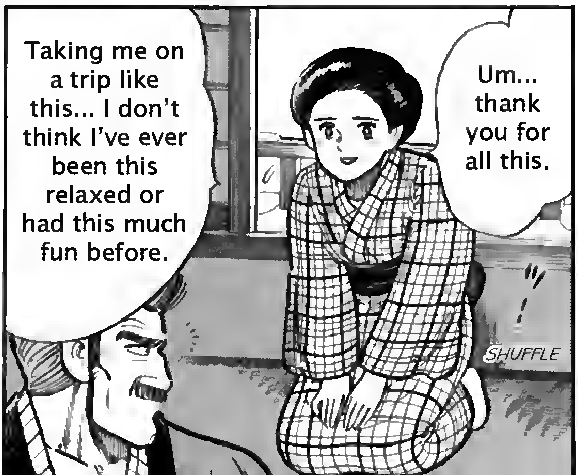
Come on, no need for you to apolo-gize...
BOW
Sorry.
Is it my fault?
Yeah, it's your fault...
Even I need a break once in a while.
But if a busi-nessman gets too relaxed, it could affect his work.
Damn... You're harsh!
Well, you better smart-en up. You've got work tomorrow!
HA HA HA HA HA
HEE HEE

Three days went by in a flash...
Aww... We have to go back tomorrow.



He makes time go by faster when people have fun...
God can sure be cruel...

I'll make time some-how...
Knock it off... We can come again later!

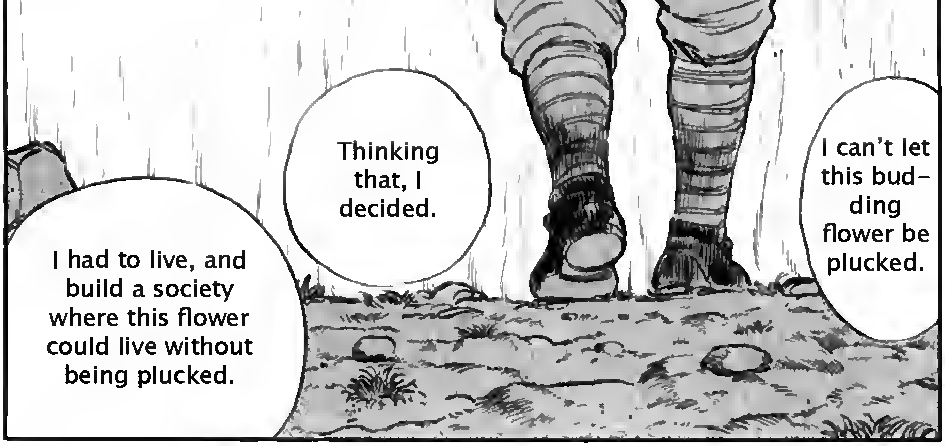

Taking me on a trip like this... I don't think I've ever been this relaxed or had this much fun before.
Um... thank you for all this.
SHUFFLE

I want to have you and make you mine!
Shizue... I want you...
No, I understand that we can never go on a trip like this again.
Truly... Thank you very much.
That's right. I will never invite you on a trip again.
CHUG
But that is one thing I can't do...
I know myself... Someday, I'd ruin you with these filthy hands of mine.
If I took you on a trip again...
SHUF
A little...
You can drink?
I'd like to have some sake too.

I'm fine...
Don't drink so fast, fool!
Lie down and rest a bit.
WOBBLE
Phew, I think I'm drunk now...
... just a fool ...
I'm just ...
No!
You've had enough...
...but being unable to forget him... I'm just a fool...
For 17 years... knowing I would never meet him again...
...so I've loved only one man this whole time.
I'm a fool...
WOBBLE

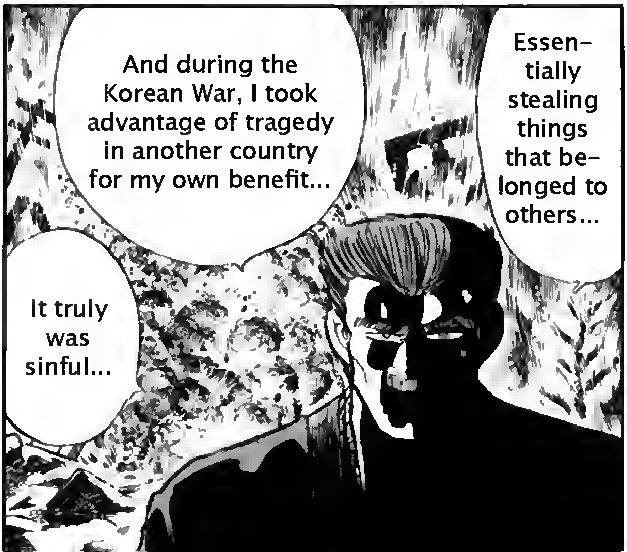
He had such sad eyes.
...then, he traded the gun he had for protection just to get me some food to eat.
17 years ago, that man gave me a doll...
...make love to me...?
Why won't you...
Do you hate me!?
It's the third day already... You haven't once tried to touch me...

No, I can't...!
Can you under-stand my feelings, Shizue...?
It was you...
17 years ago...I saw a flower that had bloomed in hell...
But that night, when I saw you treating my wounds...
Back then, I had no idea how I was supposed to go on living...
Seeing my homeland turned to hell, I realized I was wrong to be-lieve in what I fought for...
...I realized that even in hell, flowers still bloomed.


I had to live, and build a society where this flower could live without being plucked.
Thinking that, I decided.
I can't let this budding flower be plucked.

As a businessman, I became a devil.
...but once I had decided to live, I took whatever actions the sin inside me drove me to.
That may have been my plan at first...
But look at me...

Living means getting dirty...


It truly was sinful...
And during the Korean War, I took advantage of tragedy in another country for my own benefit...
Essentially stealing things that belonged to others...

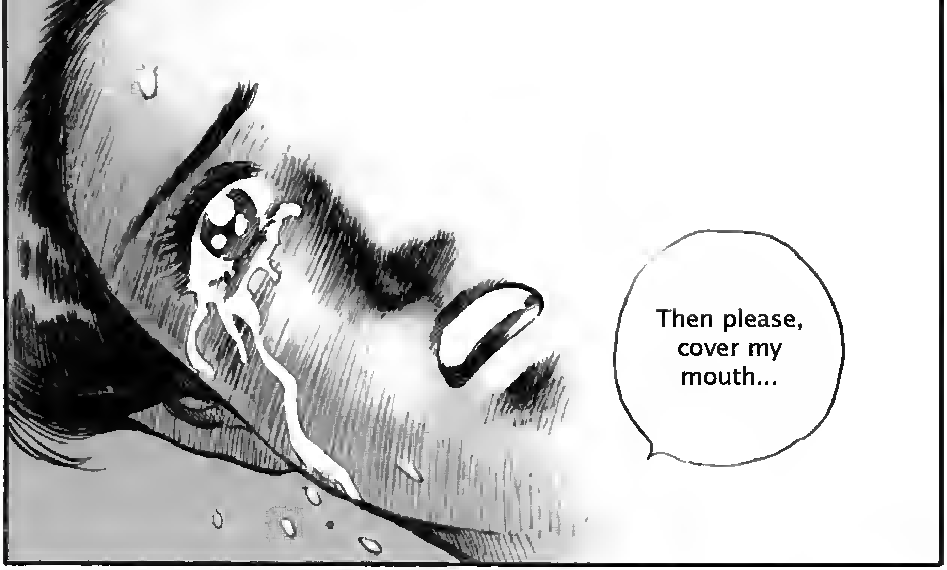
Then I happened to meet you again...
In 17 years, I have become covered in mud...
Still the same flower you were 17 years ago...
Beautiful, oh so beautiful...
...
After meeting you again, I realized once more how filthy I was...

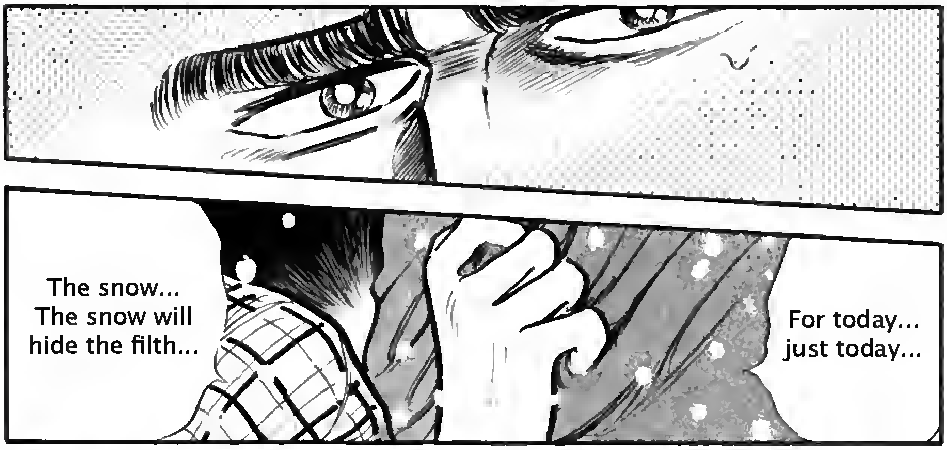
...but there was something that didn't change...
People, society...
Time changes many things.
I've become covered in mud and filth...
Y– You're ...
You, Shizue ...
You're wrong about me...
I know.
I... I'm not some kind of flower...
I had to get dirty to live as well.

I'll tell you every-thing.
N-No, listen to me!
But I don't want to hear it. I want you to be my miraculous flower...
It must have been tough for a woman to survive 17 years on her own.
I won't listen...
No...
It's like you just want me to be a pretty display...
How cruel...
I... I sold ...
Stop this...
Yes, I'm drunk! I'm only human.
You're drunk ...

No, you listen!
That's enough ...
...for nothing more than a bowl of gruel...
I sold my body...
To fill my stomach, again and again...
To strangers... men who passed me on the street...
Quiet!
Shi-zue!
SLAM
So I could live, so I could eat... I suffered through the pain...
I was only 10 years old. There are men who would take a child like me...

Live... Do whatever I had to to live...
I wanted to see you!
...and see you again...
...I'll hit you!
If you say anymore...
I understand, so please don't say anymore...
Alright...
...even though I became filthy, doing anything to live, loving only one man for 17 years...
But you... You just look at me like I'm something special...
If you don't want me to say anymore...
I... I...
Sh... Shizue...


Then please, cover my mouth...


The snow... The snow will hide the filth...
For today... just today...

Shizue...

F
Vol.8

Chapter 11: Legacy

Spring 1966
Akagi Industries
赤木重工
石澤果実店

Are you actually serious...!?
Are...
Soichi-ro...
So...
Now that the Akagi head office is this nice new buil-ding in Tokyo...
Oh, I see now. I get it...
...you're going to get rid of all the old people you don't have any use for anymore...
Please continue to help out Kasai as an advisor.

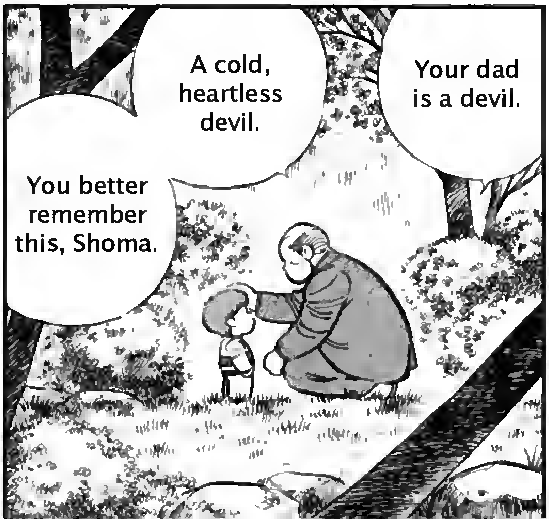
You think I would just waste someone with your capabilities?
It's not like that.
Uncle Tatsu, I would like to have you start a new business.
...
I know you. Even if I complained to the board, it would do nothing but embarrass myself further...
There's a project I have in mind.
In that case, let's talk about this new busi-ness.
I guess... I have no choice...
Good...
Waah...

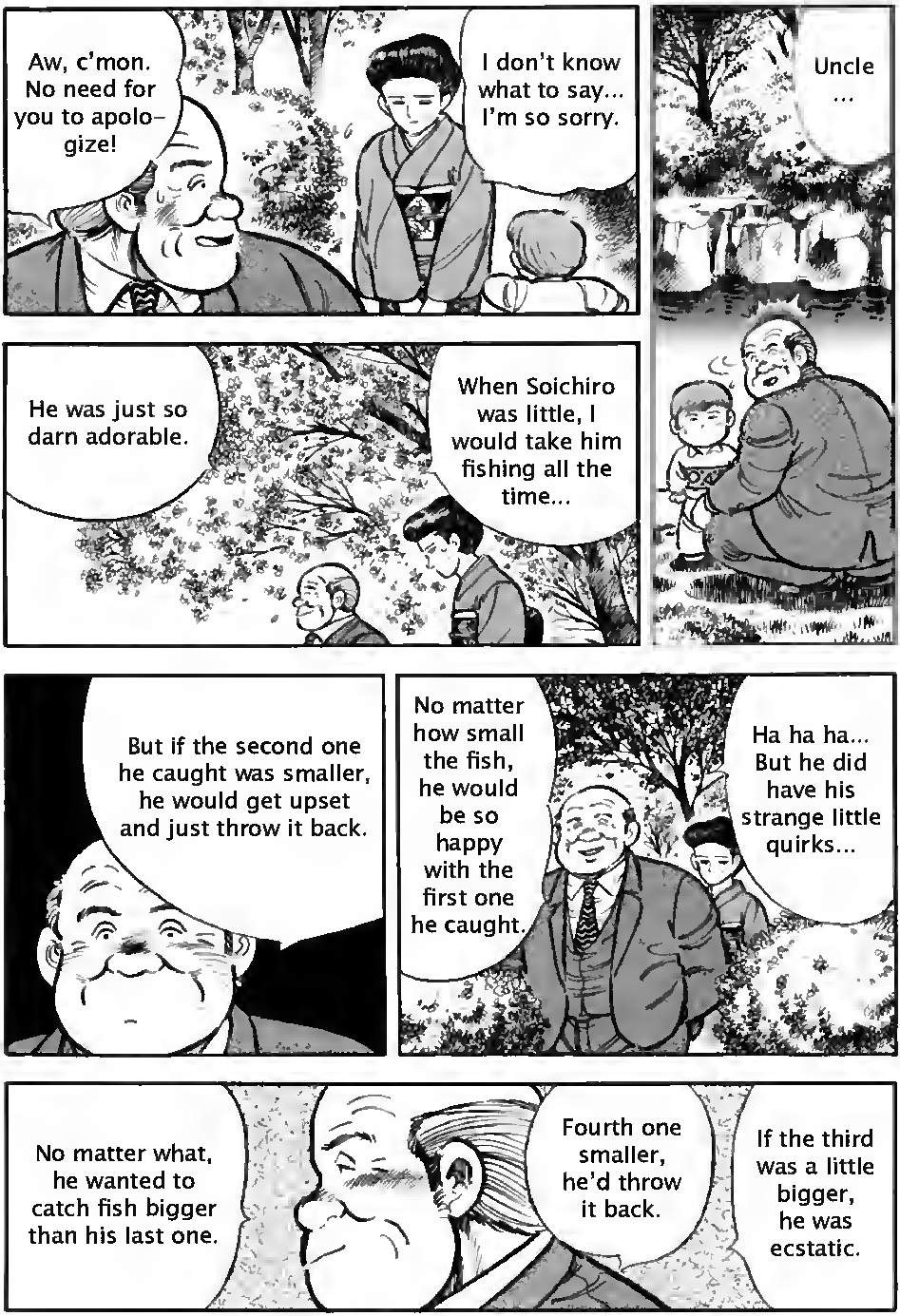
Isn't that going too far? I mean...
You're doing this because Uncle Tatsu is on my side of the family!
Non-sense!
I've known Uncle Tatsu since I was a child... He took me fishing and swimming...
Then, why!? His company is doing better every year...
Even if I hadn't married you, I would still consider Uncle Tatsu as my relative.
A res-taurant ...
A new busi-ness?
...to start a new busi-ness.
That's why I need Uncle Tatsu's

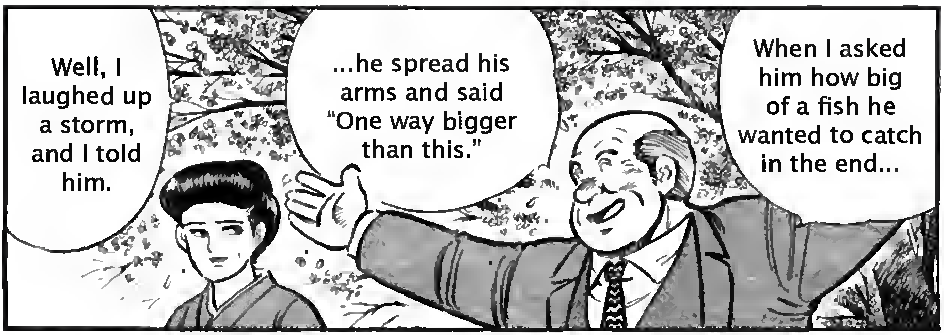
You... You want Uncle Tatsu to go and run some kind of diner!?

...that will be up to Uncle Tatsu.
Whether he runs a diner or revolutionizes the entire service industry...

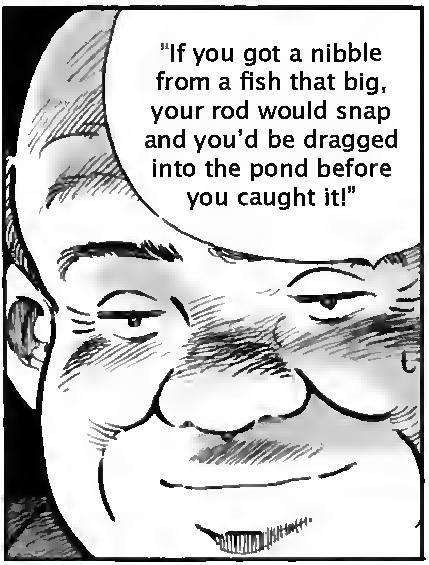
...
Your dad is a devil!

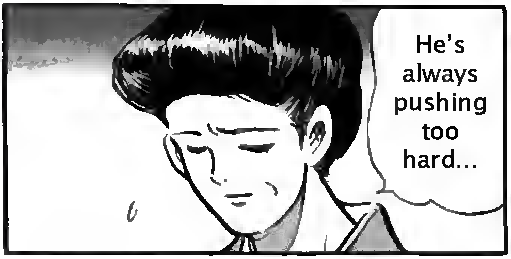

A cold, heartless devil.
Your dad is a devil.
You better remember this, Shoma.

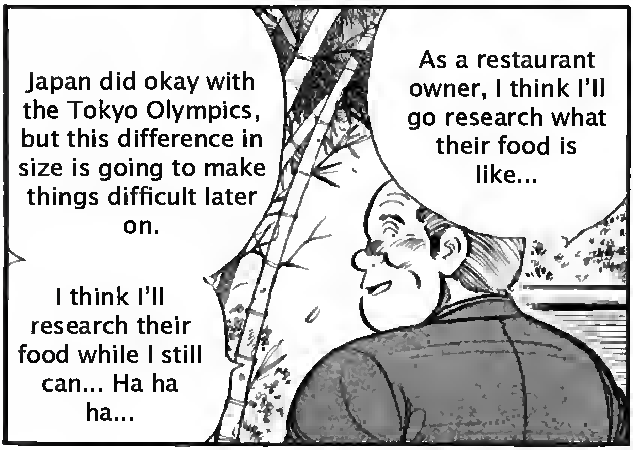

Aw, c'mon. No need for you to apolo-gize!
I don't know what to say... I'm so sorry.
Uncle ...
He was just so darn adorable.
When Soichiro was little, I would take him fishing all the time...
But if the second one he caught was smaller, he would get upset and just throw it back.
No matter how small the fish, he would be so happy with the first one he caught.
Ha ha ha... But he did have his strange little quirks...
No matter what, he wanted to catch fish bigger than his last one.
Fourth one smaller, he'd throw it back.
If the third was a little bigger, he was ecstatic.


Well, I laughed up a storm, and I told him.
...he spread his arms and said "One way bigger than this."
When I asked him how big of a fish he wanted to catch in the end...

Still the same as always...
HA HA HA
はは：
He really hasn't changed one bit...


"If you got a nibble from a fish that big, your rod would snap and you'd be dragged into the pond before you caught it!"

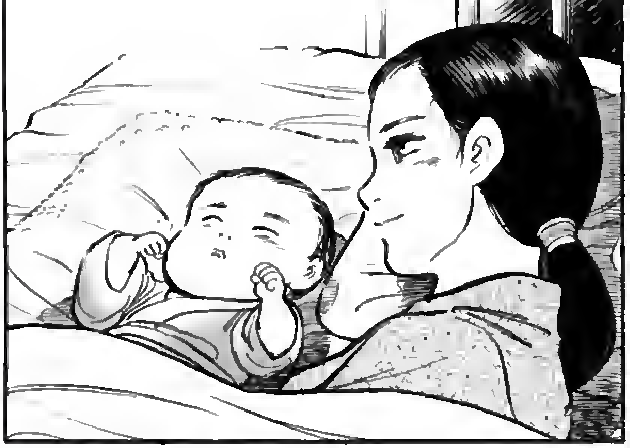

He's always pushing too hard...

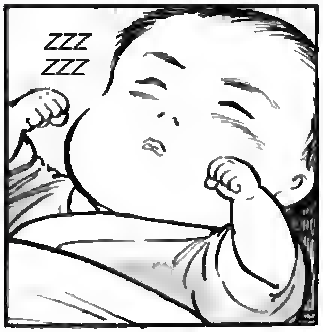

Japan did okay with the Tokyo Olympics, but this difference in size is going to make things difficult later on.
As a restaurant owner, I think I'll go research what their food is like...
I think I'll research their food while I still can... Ha ha ha...

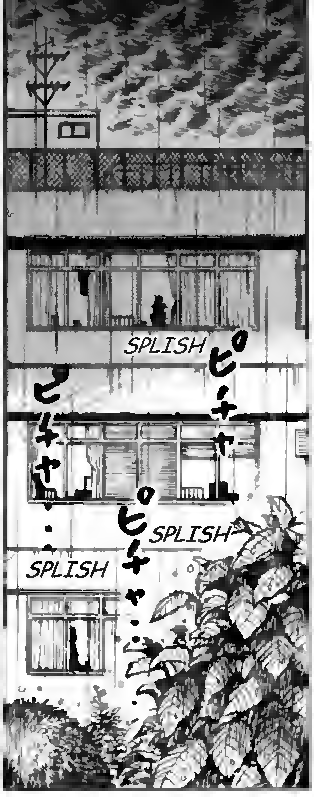
I think I'll go to America for a while...
Uncle Tatsu!?

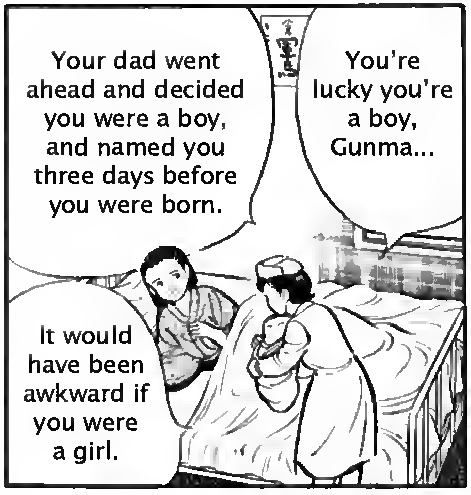
...
I won't be back tonight.
I'll take you part way, Uncle Tatsu...
Y-Yes... It's a tight schedule right now with meetings and parties, so a rookie wouldn't be able to handle it...
Still a driver, Kasai?
No, that's okay. I've got some-place to go.
President Tagawa, is it...? Bastard.
VROOM
...Presi-dent Taga-wa.
Well, I'll see you later...

It's a healthy boy.
The baby should be born soon...
Waah
Waah
I stopped off this morning.
Did you go check?
Wh-What!?
Ms. Shizue is fine too.
Born at 6:05 this morning. Weight of 3,500 grams, a little bigger than average.
I just can't make it today. I'll go first thing tomorrow morning.
RUMBLE
RUMBLE
RUMBLE
Will you be going?
I see... Thank you!
Phew!

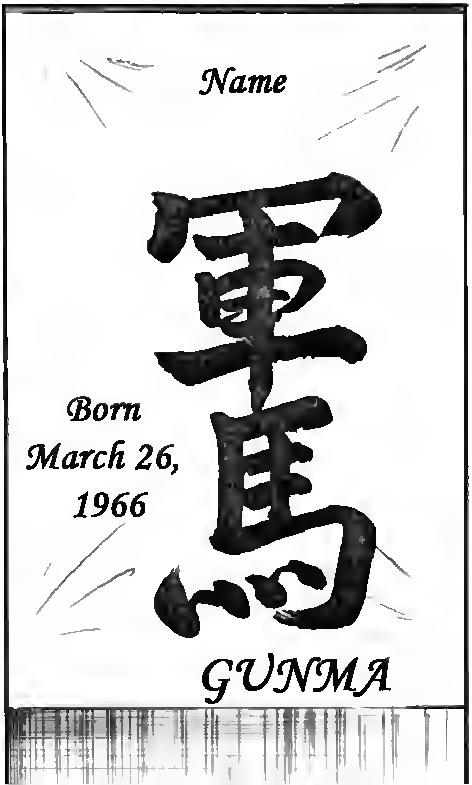



ZZZ
ZZZ


SPLISH
ピチャ
ピチャ...
SPLISH
ピチャ
SPLISH


Your dad went ahead and decided you were a boy, and named you three days before you were born.
You're lucky you're a boy, Gunma...
It would have been awkward if you were a girl.

Well, that's all for today. We'll be back tomor-row.


Name
軍馬
Born
March 26,
1966
GUNMA

KNOCK
KNOCK
Come in.
Ah... hello...
CLACK
Yes...
...?
Are you Ms. Shizue?
Hello... Pleased to meet you. My name is Tatsujiro Tagawa.
RUMBLE
KACHUK
Oh my... Light-ning...
RUMBLE
I'm Soichiro Akagi's uncle.
Um... Excuse me, but who are you ex-actly?
KRACK

The reason I had to meet with you like this today ...
...is because I want you to help me save Soichiro Akagi.
You know Kasai, right?
PATTER
PATTER
H-Has something happened ...?
The situation is urgent, so I'm very sorry to ask you this so soon after giving birth...
To put it bluntly...
...Kasai is planning to use you to take over Soichiro's company.
...
FLASH
What !?

CHIRP
CHIRP
CHIRP
KRACK
PATTER
KERKRACK

Hm ...!?
Shush ...
I couldn't wait for visiting hours, so I snuck in.
Ah ...
It's a ring. One time you asked me for a toy ring from when we were at a fair.
That would be a little too childish, so I got you this instead. Like it?
Oh yeah. I bought you this.
You did good, Shizue.
How are you feeling?
Were you crying?
It's nothing ...

They call it a miracle stone. Perfect for you.
It's a blue diamond, not just a regular diamond.
Don't worry about it.
It... it looks so expensive...
If you can't follow the rules...
Get out now, please! It's time for nursing.
Uh-oh.
How did you come in so early!? Can't you wait for visiting hours!?
Good!
Good, indeed. Pfft
CLENCH
I'll be back!
ガニッ
STOMP

...you have to leave him!
Please, Ms. Shizue...
To save Soichiro...

So from now on, I'll be even stronger... This time, instead of a doll, I'll be holding on to you...
Don't worry, Gunma... Your mom managed to live 17 years holding on to that doll your dad gave her...

F

Vol.8

Why did you disapear!?
Shizue, where'd you go!?
You gave me a reason to live...
Until I met you, I never loved anyone...
So why did you disappear!? Why did you run from me!? Where did you go!? Where!?

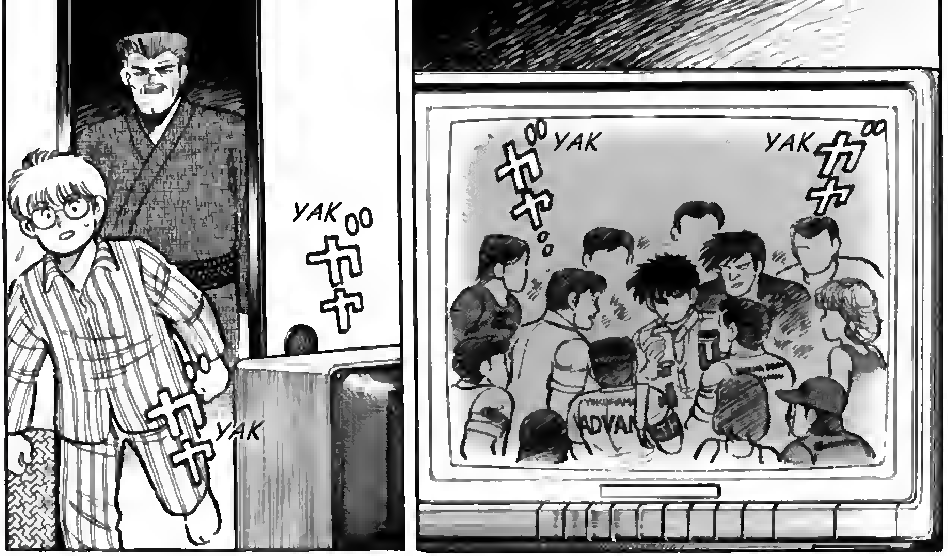
Chapter 12:
Afterimage
Shizue...!
CHIRP
CHIRP
CHIRP
1987

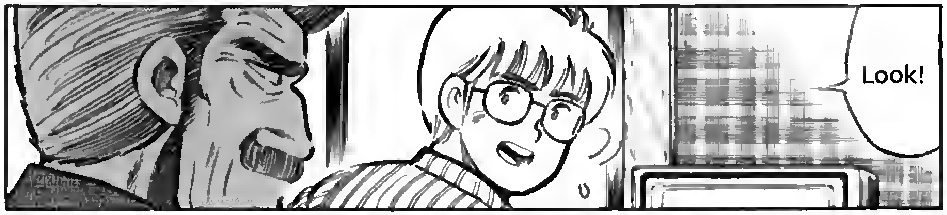
Shizue...!
CHIRP
CHIRP

Chapter 12:
Afterimage
CHIRP
1987

CHIRP
CHIRP
CHIRP
SIGH
...
I fell asleep ...
Shizue ...
What time is it now...?
I tried to wake you, but you just wouldn't get up.
Are you awake?
SWISH

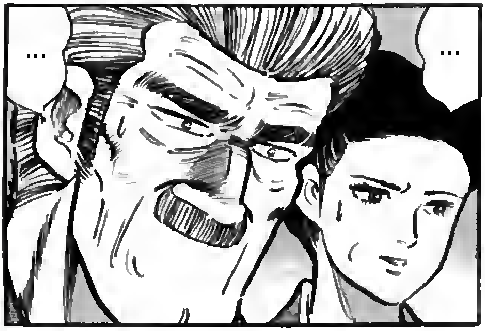
What time is it?
Just after 10 o'clock.
Here's some tea.
Don't push yourself too hard...
Yeah, I know.
There's still time before the next general election.
Mr. Emoto promised he would get you the endorsement you need next time.
For now, it's important that you keep healthy...
Dad...
SLAM
What's the fuss, Yuma?
Hurry and come!
Gunma is on TV...


YAK
YAK
YAK
YAK


Look!

It's amazing. six wins in a row since your F3 debut! Truly incredible!
NGK
SPARK PLUG

Is it because of Hijiri and your duel with him in the first race?
Just what is it that makes you so fast?
I heard your chief mechanic Tamotsu Oishi is from the same town. Is that it?
Do you have a girlfriend? Favorite celebrity?
What about future goals? Do you have your eyes on F1...!?
What racer do you admire?
NGK
PHOENIX
TOYOTA


...
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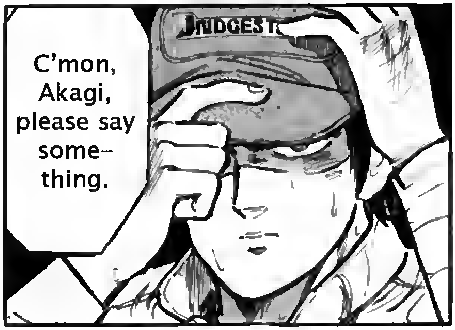
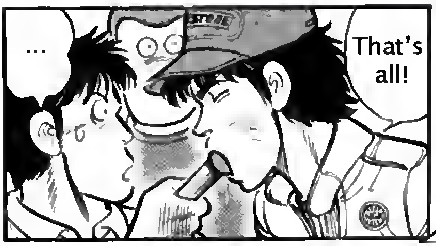
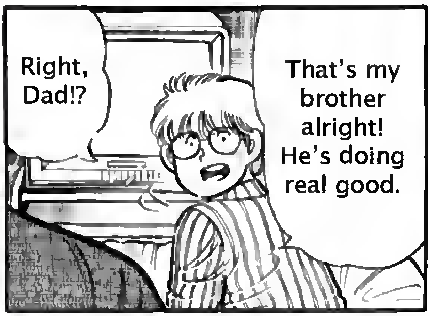
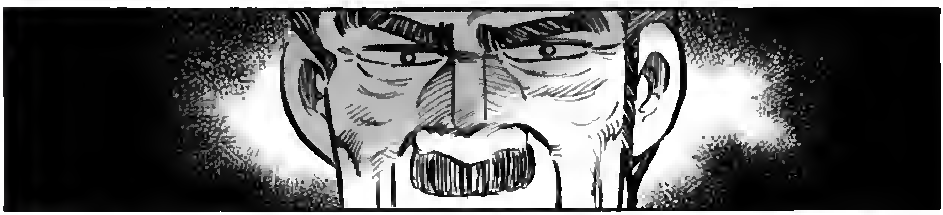

C'mon, Akagi, please say some-thing.


...
That's all!

Ha ha ha! So that was this week's interview! Up next, touring car race results...


Right, Dad!?
That's my brother alright! He's doing real good.

Nobody gets in front of me!

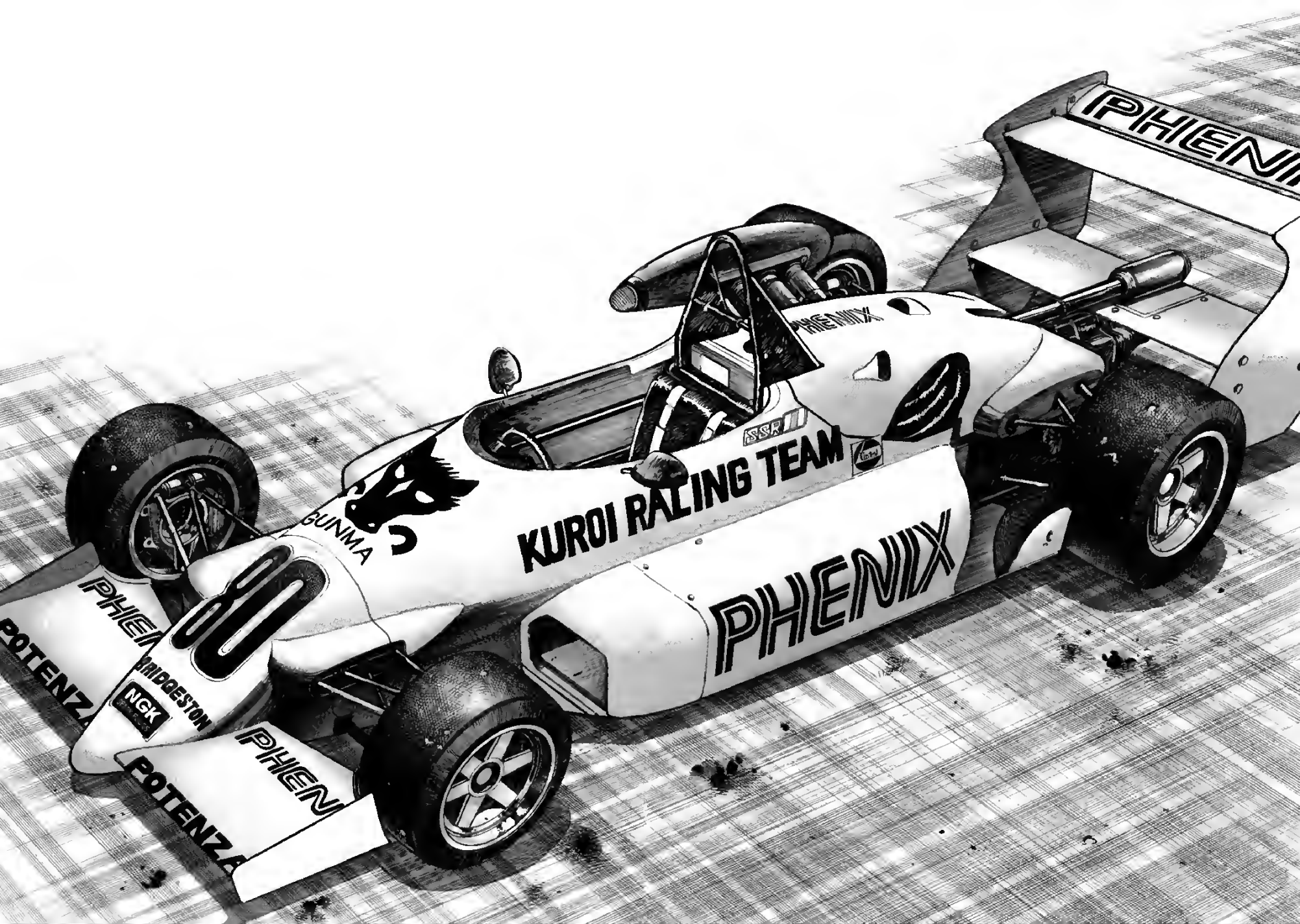


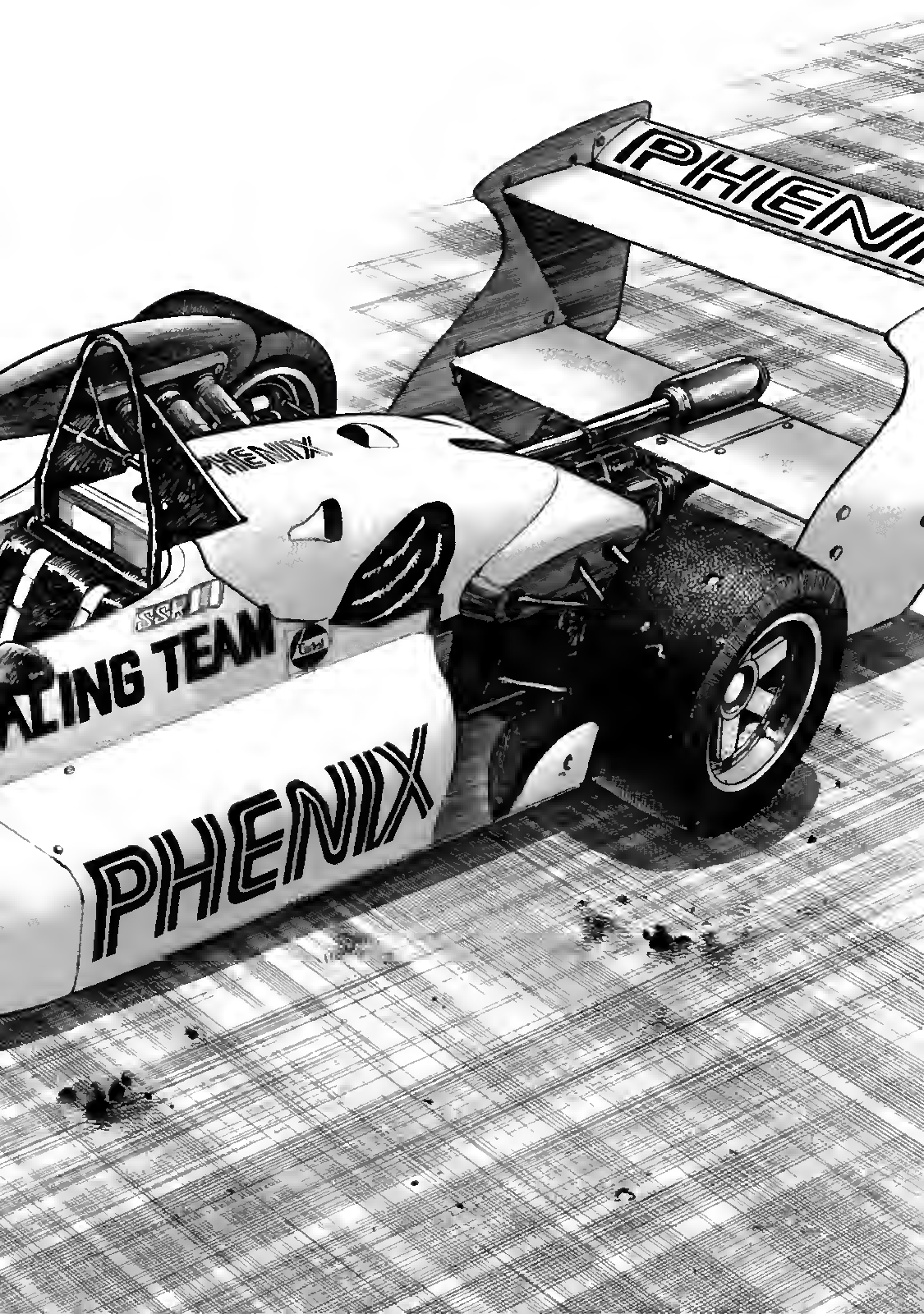
Stop calling him your brother.
Yuma... Gunma is no longer a member of this family.

I'm turning off the TV...
...
Dad...
THUD
!?
Yuma... Try not to cause any problems for your father.
CLICK
In times like these, the whole family has to work together... Okay, Yuma?
He had trouble getting votes in the last election, and is betting everything on the next one.
What exactly is family?
...Mom...
Well in that case...

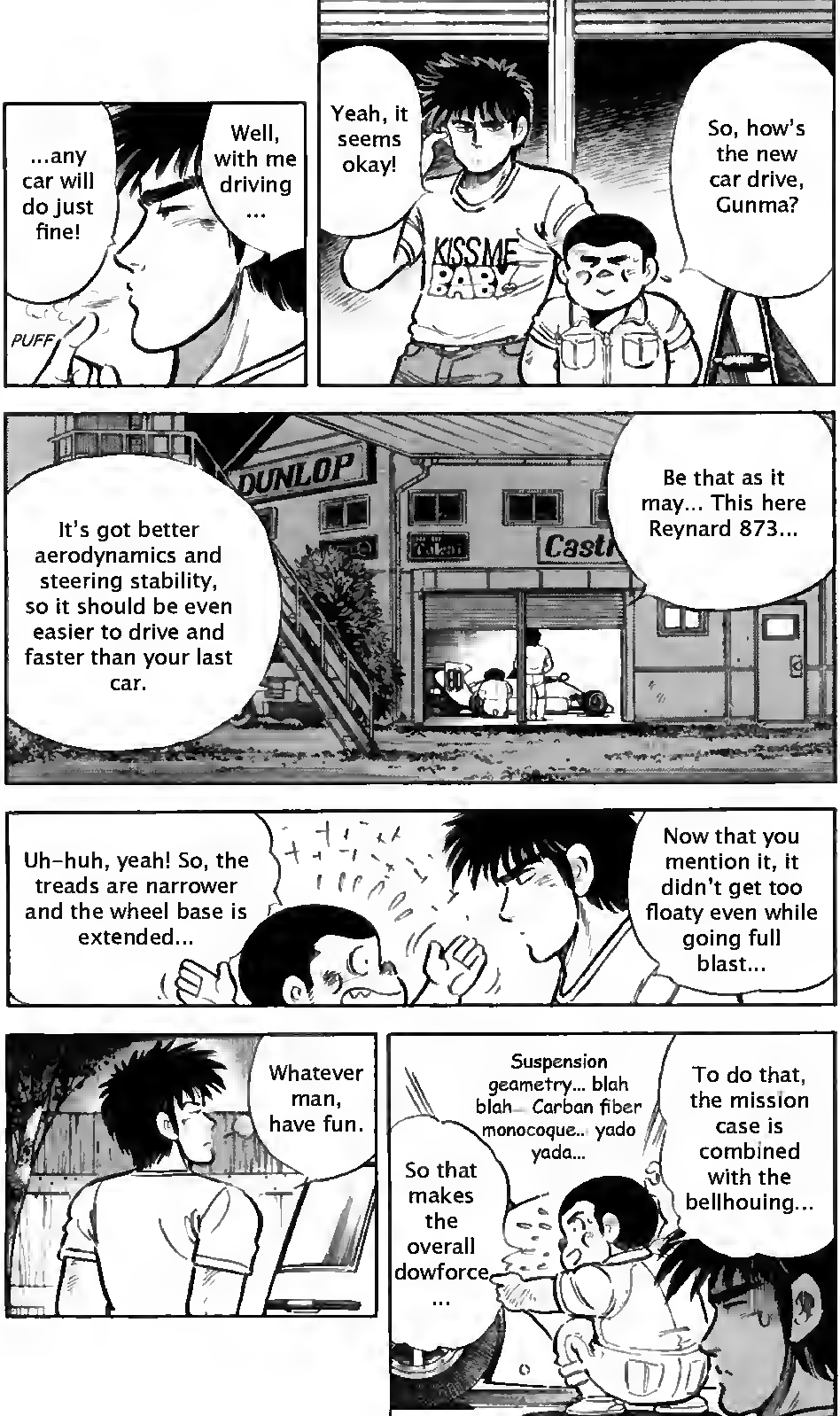
Mom ...
Now, lie down ...
That's why your heart gets irregular all the time.
There you go again, always thinking too hard.
Why not!?
Gunma is not our family.
Gunma is family too, isn't he!?
!
T-That may be true, but...
Gunma isn't my child, now is he!?
He took care of him out of honor, but all he did was shame your father.
Your father truly dislikes Gunma as well...

...but does dad really hate Gunma...?
I'm sure mom does...
A..I...
THUMP
Don't worry, and just concentrate on getting better so you can help the Akagi family...
Now, you just forget about Gunma.
CHIRP
CHIRP
CHIRP


PHENIX
PHENIX
KUROI RACING TEAM
GUNMA
PHENIX
PHENIX
POTENZA
BRIDGESTON
NGK
PHEN
POTENZA


PHENIX
PHENIX
ALING TEAM
PHENIX

GUNMA
KUROI R
PHEN
BRIDGESTON
NGK
POTENZA
PHEN
POTENZA


...any car will do just fine!
Well, with me driving ...
PUFF
Yeah, it seems okay!
So, how's the new car drive, Gunma?
KISS ME BABY
It's got better aerodynamics and steering stability, so it should be even easier to drive and faster than your last car.
Be that as it may... This here Reynard 873...
DUNLOP
Uh-huh, yeah! So, the treads are narrower and the wheel base is extended...
Now that you mention it, it didn't get too floaty even while going full blast...
Whatever man, have fun.
So that makes the overall dowforce ...
Suspension geometry... blah blah... Carban fiber monocoque... yado yada...
To do that, the mission case is combined with the bellhouing...

...
Dammit ... Goro...
FLASH
KISS ME BABY
Phew ...
Yes, give me more anger!
...stop blinding me with your damn flash, you third- rate camera- man!
FWIP
Would you please ...
Heh heh heh. I thought you'd be here.
Mr. Goro.
Hey!
Argh, my eyes...
KISS ME BABY
You love it!
Shut up.
Pose!
SNAP
まどろすさん

He's won six times in a row since his debut, man!
If Gunma becomes the champion this year, they'll publish my photo book!
Wow, that's great!
Heh heh! Tamotsu, I did it! I finally got noticed by a publisher!
I know, I know!
Hey Goro, I'm expecting this to cash out big!
You made the paperwork and signed it yourself, jerk!
SPLASH
And I'm the one who has that amazing racer's exclusive modeling contract! Hooray for Goro!
Heh... But seriously, though...
...
If my rival died like that, I don't know if I'd be able to handle it...
It may just be because of his tough skin...
Yup...
I was worried for a while that he might get depressed about Hijiri...
He's doing good...

A pho-to!?
!?
There's no point in me keeping it, but it wouldn't be right to sell it to the media either.
Actually, Tamotsu, I have a photo I want to give to Gunma.
I just happened to take it...
It's a photo from right before Hijiri died...
!!
SHOEI

Ah...
SNATCH
I considered burning it... I thought it over a while, but... Gunma seems fine now, so I think he should be the one to have it...
Th... This is...
Gu... Gunma...!

"F" Volume 8 THE END

F VOL.8

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